

M11

## M11 by Misty the Fangirly Lady

**Category:** Stranger Things, 2016

**Genre:** Drama, Supernatural

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Eleven/Jane H., Jonathan B., Kali/Eight, Mike W.

**Pairings:** Eleven/Jane H./Mike W.

**Status:** In-Progress

**Published:** 2017-11-19 08:36:22

**Updated:** 2019-12-12 12:44:56

**Packaged:** 2019-12-12 14:12:51

**Rating:** T

**Chapters:** 59

**Words:** 287,315

**Publisher:** [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

**Summary:** Jane Ives's best friend goes missing before Kali Ives's, Terry Ives is slowly getting more suspicious of the disappearance of Will Byers, and a strange boy appears in the woods. All of this is connected to a larger puzzle somehow... \*Role-Reversal AU. Jane x Mike, Kali x Steve, one-sided Will x Jane. My own retelling of the show. Constructive criticism is welcome!\*

## 1. It's A Seven

Hello and welcome to my fanfic! Thanks for checking it out! Ever since I first watched this show, I always wanted to write a "What If" scenario with some of the roles switched. Here's a list of the switched roles:

Eleven-Mike (She'll be referred to as Jane for the entirety of this fanfic.)

Mike-Eleven

Kali-Nancy (I'm going off on the speculation that she's around the same age as Nancy.)

Nancy-Kali

Terry Ives-Karen Wheeler

Karen Wheeler-Terry Ives

As for some changed bits, I've decided to have Mr. Wheeler and Dr. Brenner work together. Terry Ives is also a single mother, like Joyce, and is somehow connected to the events going on. Kali and Jonathan are going to form a friendship instead of a romance and there's a possibility that I might have a one-sided Will x Jane, but I'm not sure yet.

This will be sort of a retelling of the story of Stranger Things, but I'll change some things up a bit to make it stray from canon. I should also mention that I won't be writing every scene in the show here, just ones I think are necessary. With that said, here's the first chapter! Enjoy!

\*Edit of 06/16/19: I'll be doing, for lack of a better word, a sweep of this fanfic, fixing some mistakes that I glossed over while writing this. No big plot events will change for the most part, but some parts might be different. That said, enjoy reading!

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Late at night, Jane Ives was in the basement of her home with her friends, playing D&D together. She had curly brown hair with matching colored eyes. She wore a gray short-sleeved shirt with a red-colored neckline and cuffs and baggy jeans. In her naturally soft voice, she narrated, "You can feel it, the shadows slowly creeping towards you...the only sounds heard are its steps and the beating of your heart."

"What is it?" one of her friends named Will Byers asked. He had auburn hair in a bowl cut and dark-brown eyes. He wore a blue-plaided long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans, and sneakers.

"It's gotta be the Demogorgon!" answered another one of her friends, Dustin Henderson. His hair was light-brown and curly like Jane's and his eyes were blue. His front two teeth were missing. He wore a grey sweatshirt, dark sweatpants, and sneakers.

"No, it's not!" replied the last one of her friends named Lucas Sinclair. He was African-American with short black hair and dark brown eyes. He wore a blue and yellow long-sleeved shirt, grey jeans, and sneakers as well.

"Uh, yeah!"

"Uh, no!"

The curly-haired girl grabbed a character piece and said slowly, "It turns out to be..." She then slammed the piece onto the board and finished, "An army of troglodytes, storming right towards you!"

Dustin smirked. "Troglodytes?"

Lucas snickered. "Told ya!" The group then laughed before Jane dropped her light-hearted expression and looked worried.

"Do you hear that?" she asked. "That sound...?" The boys looked at her curiously. "It goes like 'boom'...'boom'...it doesn't sound like it came from the troglodytes-" She then slammed one of her hands on the table and shouted, "BOOM!" Every boy jolted in surprise. "Where is that coming from? Who does that sound belong to?" She then grabbed another character piece and slammed onto the board. "The

Demogorgon!" The boys groaned and cried out complaints.

"We're so screwed!" Dustin cried out.

Jane then looked at Will and asked, "Will the Wise, what will you do?"

The auburn-haired boy looked at the board in a baffling manner. "I-I don't know!"

"Fireball him!" shouted Lucas.

"But I need to roll a thirteen or higher!"

"Don't take the risk!" suggested Dustin. "Cast a Protection Spell!"

Lucas scowled at him. "Don't pussy out of this! Use Fireball!"

"Protection Spell!"

Jane slammed her hands on the table and yelled, "BOOM! The Demogorgon has enough of your human bickering! It stomps towards you all! BOOM!" The boys went into a panic, especially Will, arguing about whether or not he should attack or protect himself. "BOOM!" She slammed the table again, making the boys argue even more. "It releases its mighty roar!" As the boys continued clamoring, Will decided to choose the offense.

"Fireball!" he shouted as he shook the dice and rolled them. However, they ended up on the floor, making them all freak out.

"Oh shit!" exclaimed Lucas. Everyone stood up and searched the floor for them frivolously.

"Where did it go?!" Jane also exclaimed.

"Is it a thirteen?!" shouted Dustin.

"I don't know!" Will answered.

The group of friends continued searching on the floor for them until Ms. Ives yelled, "Jane!" She shouted her name a few times, but she

never responded due to her and the boys yelling about the missing dice. The woman then opened the door and repeated, "JANE!"

The girl looked up from the floor and looked at her with an irritated face. "Mama, we're in the middle of a campaign!" she yelled.

"Then end it! You're fifteen minutes past your bedtime!" She then left, leaving the curly-haired girl sighing and going upstairs with her.

"Mama! Can you just give us at least twenty minutes?!" she asked in a pleading tone.

Ms. Ives sighed as she began to clean the dishes from dinner. "It's a school night, Jane," she answered. "I can't. You can finish next weekend."

Jane groaned and rolled her eyes at her. "But the flow will be ruined!"

"Jane-"

"I'm not kidding, Mama! This campaign took two hard weeks to plan!"

The woman looked at her with a serious expression. "Young lady, what did I tell you? It's a school night. And you guys have been playing that game for hours. It's time for bed."

The girl began to pout and crossed her arms. "Well, Kali doesn't get to go to bed this early!"

"Because she's studying. Playing a silly board game won't give you good grades, Jane."

She felt defeated, but wanted to keep going. "But Mama-"

"Jane." She gave her a stern glare. Now she knew she couldn't win the argument. She deeply sighed and went downstairs, feeling really upset.

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The boys eventually found the dice, seeing that it was a seven. They decided not to tell Jane and put on their jackets and backpacks to leave. Jane passed Lucas and Will before seeing Dustin in front of the stairs. "Hey Jane, ya wanna slice?" he asked.

She shook her head. "No thanks," she answered as she reached the basement floor to clean up the table. The curly-haired boy decided to go upstairs to Kali's room.

He saw her in her bedroom, talking on the phone. The girl was of Indian descent and looked girlier than her adoptive sister, having straight black hair and light-colored pajamas. Hell, her room looked more girlier than Jane's would ever be. He smiled at the sight of her and asked, "Hey, Kali!" The teenage girl looked at him with an annoyed look. "There's a slice if you want one!" He opened the box. "It's sausage and pepperoni!"

The girl heavily sighed and said, "One moment." She put the phone down, walked up to him, and slammed the door on him. He looked shocked that she even did that, not even a smile.

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As all of them were out, Dustin stated, "There's something wrong with your sister, Jane."

She scoffed. "Really?" she asked.

"Yeah, she's being more of a jerk by the day."

"True," added Lucas and Will as all the boys got their bikes.

"Well, it's because she's dating that douchebag, Steve Harrington," Jane replied. "Of course she'd be a jerk. She always is."

"Not really," said the curly-haired boy as he and the others began to ride out. "Remember when she dressed up as an elf for our Elder campaign?"

"Yeah, like four years ago!"

Dustin shrugged as he rode off. "Just saying!"

Lucas followed suit, plainly saying, "See ya."

Before Will rode out, he thought about telling Jane the truth, so he said, "It's a seven." She turned to him with a puzzled look. "The roll was a seven. The Demogorgon got me." Her eyes widened a little.

"Oh..." She smiled at him. "At least you're honest."

He smiled back a little, murmuring, "Yeah..." He then unmounted his bike and rode off. "Well, I'll see you tomorrow, Jane!" She waved him goodbye before noticing the outdoor lights flickering a little. She looked confused on why they did that. Perhaps the electricity was just being weird? She didn't know. She went back inside and upstairs to her room, dressing in her pajamas and going to bed.

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The next day at Hawkins Middle, Jane, Lucas, and Dustin all rode their bikes to the student drop-off, as they usually do. Jane wore a dark-brown coat, a white long-sleeved shirt, blue overalls, white socks, and brown shoes. Lucas wore a brown puffy coat, plain white shirt, blue jeans, and sneakers while Dustin wore a brown coat, a teal jacket with decal on it, long khakis, and sneakers.

When they parked their bikes at the bike stands, the tomboy heaved her backpack up a little and said, "That's weird. I haven't seen Will." All that she knew was that his mom called hers about him this morning and that he was probably getting to school early.

"Hey, his mom could be right," Lucas replied as they all head to their class. "He could have gotten here early again."

"Yeah, like he's always paranoid about pop quizzes and shit," Dustin added.

"Step right up, ladies and gentlemen!" announced a young male's voice. The trio stopped and looked irritated before turning to see two boys, a brunette boy and a taller auburn-haired boy. Both of them were named Troy and James. "It's time to get your tickets to the freak show!" All of them looked mad at them before Jane crossed her arms. "Who can make more money in a freak show?" He then began pushing, starting with Lucas. "Midnight..." He pushed Jane.



"Tranny..." Finally, he pushed Dustin. "Or Toothless?"

Even as a girl, these bullies didn't care about that because she was one of the boys and unlike any other girl they knew in this town: wearing boyish clothes, having boys as friends, and liking boy things, thus calling her a "tranny". She tried her best not to lose her cool with them though. She knew that fighting them would get her in trouble.

James began thinking, looking at the three. "Tranny's close..." he stated before exaggeratedly mocking Dustin's way of speaking. "But Toofless winsth!"

The curly-haired boy looked annoyed at them. "I told you so many times that my teeth are coming in! It's called cleidocranial dysphlagia."

He mocked him though, saying through his offensive imitation of him, "I toldth you so manith timesth!" The bullies chuckled while the trio were unimpressed with their insults.

Troy looked at Dustin and demanded, "Do the arm thing."

He hesitated until the other bully shouted, "Do it, you freak!" Not wanting to get beat up, he took off his coat and stretched his arms out, the sounds of bones snapping heard. Both bullies looked disgusted at that.

"Gets me every time..." the brunette said before shoving the trio out of the way to get to class.

"Assholes," Lucas muttered.

Jane sighed. "Calling them 'assholes' is an understatement," she replied before looking at Dustin, who was putting his coat back on. She gave him a friendly smile. "I think it's cool that you can do that. It's like you have a power, like...Mr. Fantastic."

Dustin chuckled a little. "Except I can't fight evil with it," he added.

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In Hawkins High School, Kali walked into the building, carrying her books. She wore a flower-patterned dress with many shades of

purple, semi-transparent white tights, and small black heels. Over the dress was a black casual dress jacket with a purple shoulder purse.

Once she entered the building, a red-haired girl walked beside her and asked, "Did he call?" Kali looked to see her best friend, Barbara Holland.

She nervously giggled a little and replied, "Keep your voice down, Barbara."

Barbara smirked and whispered, "Did he?"

She shook her head. "It's not like that. He doesn't like me THAT much." She then arrived at her locker and used its combination to open it.

"Didn't you tell me that you two made out a couple of times?" The dark-haired girl nervously chuckled. She did, in fact, tell her that over the phone the other night. "Kal, seriously. You're going to get so popular now."

She shook her head again. "No, I won't."

"Yeah you will." The red-haired female laughed. "All that I'm saying is that you better still be friends with me." Kali gave her a reassuring smile.

"Of course, Barbara, how could I not?" Her locker finally opened.

She shrugged. "Oh, I don't know, like being friends with Tommy H. or even Carol-"

Kali immediately scoffed. "No way! Gross!" She then put the books she was carrying into her locker. "Besides, what we did was a one...two-time thing." She felt embarrassed, correcting herself like that, Barbara raising her eyebrows and smirking at her. She sighed as she found a note in her locker. She pulled it out and unfolded it. It read:

*Kal, meet me in the bathroom*

*- Steve*

Her heart fluttered by the implications of the letter.

"A two-time thing, no?" Barbara asked sarcastically. She knew, Kali knew, but now, she didn't mind.

...

In the bathroom, Steve and Kali began making out. He pinned her to the wall, his lips connecting with hers at every second. He was carrying her by her hips due to their height difference. His lips then moved to her neck as she said, "St-Steve."

"Mmm-hmm?" he hummed through her neck, still kissing it.

"I need to go."

"In a minute." They heard the bell ring, making Kali feel a little panicked.

"Steve-" Her sentence was interrupted by him kissing her lips again. "I have...to go." She then reached down to her purse, but her boyfriend beat her to it, snatching it and breaking the kiss.

"Wait, let's just talk about this," he said, lowering her to the ground. "How about we do something tonight?"

She looked at him with a nervous look and got her books from the ground. "No, sorry. I have to study for Kamisky's test."

He looked at her curiously. "What's your G.P.A. again? Wasn't it a 3.999-"

She playfully punched his shoulder. "His tests are impossible, Steve!" She tried getting her purse, but he kept pulling it away from her.

"Then let me help you," he suggested.

She raised an eyebrow. "I'm fine studying by my smart self, thank you very much."

He almost looked offended, but still smiled. "It's just a C-."

"A grade away from a D +."

"Then how about I come over to have you help me study? Eight?" He then offered her purse. She instantly took it and thought about it, shaking her head.

"My mum would kill you if you-" she answered before he interrupted.

"Then I climb through your window. I'll be stealthy, like a ninja. She wouldn't even know I'm there."

She sighed, thinking about it again. She figured he just wanted to "study" with her, making her scoff. "It's off." She was going to leave when he grabbed her hand and pulled her to him.

"Hey, come on now. Just...forget about that. We can just chill in my car, parked somewhere nice and quiet..." He caressed her arm, but her smile disappeared.

"I have to study, Steve. I'm not joking."

He gave her a sly smile and asked, "Why else would I park somewhere nice and quiet?" He had a point, making her smile again. She usually studies alone, but since he insisted...

"Dearborn and Maple. Meet me there, to STUDY." She put emphasis on the last word as she began to leave. "Idiot Steve Harrington." She then opened the door and left the bathroom. She kept what she thought was a stupid smile, her heart fluttering and her cheeks becoming rosy red. This could be the best study night she has ever gone to...

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In a large, sophisticated-looking building, an array of cars arrived. A bunch of men with suitcases came out of them and approached two men standing next to one another. One of them had dark-brown hair, dark brown eyes, and glasses while the other had blue eyes and grayish-white hair. Both of them wore trench-coats and looked out at the distance, talking to one another.

"Dr. Brenner, Dr. Wheeler," one of the men greeted, getting their attention. They all shook hands with one another and went inside.

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As they walked in the building, a bunch of scientists joined them. "This way, gentlemen," one of the scientists said as the men followed him. He talked to both of the doctors, "The entire east wing should be evacuated within an hour. We've sealed off this area due to quarantine protocol." They all arrived at a place that was zipped up and labeled with a bio-hazard sign. One of the soldiers guarding the door opened it up for them and they all went inside.

In another room inside there, they put on protection suits and armed themselves, about to go into a place deep within the complex.

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The elevator hummed as it took them down to where they needed to be. It stopped and opened, the men looking out with their flashlights. The air was filled with large dust-like spores, floating around. From afar, the doctors noticed the light blinking, becoming more wary of their surroundings.

They continued down the hallway and saw what looked like burn marks on the wall and on the floor. On closer inspection, these weren't burn marks, but gooey-looking marks that squelched at every second. The door to the other room was opened, so they walked into that. Low growling was heard in the room, making men turn and see a...mysterious-looking hole in the wall. It was made of the same material as the marks in the hallway. Below were worm-like organisms. Black, slimy webs were covering it and the hole itself was covered in some sac-like substance, glowing red every few seconds.

"This is where it came from?" asked one of the men that arrived at the building.

"Yes," Dr. Brenner answered.

"And the boy?"

"He couldn't have gone far," Dr. Wheeler answered, sounding very sure of it.

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In the woods in Hawkins, a boy walked through it, the leaves crunching at his every step. His skin was pale, the darkest parts being the orange, semi-visible freckles on his face. He had dark-brown eyes and a shaved head. He wore nothing more than a dirty hospital gown. He saw the back of a building not far from him, a man appearing out of the door to throw a trash bag in a trash can. He looked at the building intently, wanting to go in there as the man went back in.

He walked to the door and opened it slowly. He crept inside and looked around. It looked like he was in a storage room and he could faintly smell food, making him feel so hungry. He hadn't been fed before he left...that bad place. He walked towards the smell and the sound of the music playing from a jukebox. He saw adults, including the man he saw, talking to each other. He wished not to be caught by them, so he wandered over to the kitchen, looking for any kind of food.

As he wondered, he saw a basket of fries, thinking they were food. He approached and took one fry, looking around to make sure he wasn't caught. He then took a bite of it, tasting the grease and the salt. It tasted good to him, so good...

He looked around again to make sure the adults weren't looking at him. He then grabbed most of the fries with both of his hands and began scarfing them down to satisfy his hunger. He couldn't get enough of them, he needed more...

Suddenly, the man he saw turned back and saw him eating the fries, shouting, "Hey!" He jolted up, seeing that he was caught. He instantly grabbed the fries and ran out the door. "Come back here!" The man chased him down and eventually caught him in the storage room, making him drop the fries. He roughly grabbed him by the shoulders and shook him a little. "You think you can come in here and steal from me, boy?!" He looked scared, panting and his eyes wide as plates. The man looked at him again, puzzled. "What the hell...?" he muttered.

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**Done! What do you think so far? Don't be afraid to review and even give me some constructive criticism! I'll inform you guys if**

there are any other changes I've made throughout this fanfic.

Review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you in the next chapter!

**\*EDITS of 06/16/19:**

- Removed some sentences that described the obvious
- Changed a couple typos
- Changed "Eastern-Asian" to "Indian"
- Separated a paragraph of Troy demanding Dustin to do the "arm thing" into two
- Changed the format of Steve's note
- Removed "almost" in a sentence describing Kali's heart
- Had Steve carry Kali while making out with her

## 2. Uh, That's Not Will

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

**\*Fun Fact: This was actually supposed to be combined with Chapter 1 since it's one episode, but I thought it was too long, so I split them apart. That's why there's another chapter after a day, because it was practically pre-written. Anyways, as I said, enjoy! \***

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Back in Hawkins Middle, the school bell rang as the children got their things and began to leave. The teacher, Mr. Clarke, announced their homework and talked a little about the test before they all left. In front of his desk were Jane, Lucas, and Dustin, making him face them. They all looked at him eagerly. "Is it here?" the tomboy asked.

He frowned at the kids. "Sorry kids, but..." he replied, making their eager faces slowly disappear. However, he smiled and said, "It's here." Their faces lit up in excitement again.

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They went to the AV room and saw the set they were asking for, looking very happy and excited to try it out. They put down their backpacks and went to it, Jane sitting in front of it. "The Heathkit ham shack," Mr. Clarke stated.

"Awesome..." Jane murmured before putting on the headphones.

"I know, isn't she a beaut?"

Dustin began to turn the knob of one part of the set as he said, "I bet you can talk to New York with this thing!"

"Think bigger."

Lucas turned to him. "California?"

"Bigger..."



Jane thought of another country and asked, "Australia?" He nodded as the trio exclaimed words of sheer joy.

"Will is going to blow his SHIT when he sees this!" the African-American boy stated.

The science teacher looked at him in disapproval. "Lucas," he said to him sternly.

The boy realized what he did and replied, "Sorry." The kids then set up the settings for the Heathkit. Jane decided to press the button on the microphone and try on her best Australian accent.

"Ello, this is Jane Ives," she spoke into it. "I'm the president of the Hawkins AV Club." The curly-haired boy then took her headphones and wore them, making her finger get off of the button and making her laugh. "What are you doing, Dustin?"

He pressed it and said in his best Australian accent, "Ello, this is Dustin Henderson, the press secretary and treasurer of the Hawkins AV Club! Do ya eat kangaroos for breakfast?" The children laughed together, having a good time before he took off the headphones to give it to Lucas.

However, the fun and games ended when the principal entered into the room, the happiness dying off as he asked, "Excuse me, but can I borrow Dustin, Jane, and Lucas for a minute?" They all looked confused and even a little scared. What did he need them for?

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In his office was the town's police chief, Jim Hopper, and another cop with a notepad. He was asking them where Will might have gone. All of them were talking over each other, making him feel stressed. "Alright, alright!" The kids stopped talking. "One at a time, okay?" He then looked at the curly-haired girl. "You." She nodded. "You said he takes what?"

"Mirkwood," she answered.

He looked confused. "Mirkwood?"

She nodded again. "It's, um, where Cornwallis and Kerley meet. We call it that because it's from Lord of the Rings."

"Actually, the Hobbit," Dustin corrected her, making her look a bit annoyed at him.

"Does it matter?" asked Lucas before the two argued.

"Guys, can you shut up?" Jane asked, though the two didn't listen to her.

"Hey!" shouted Jim, making them silence themselves. "I told you already, one at a damn time." He looked at Jane again. "Cornwallis and Kerley, you said?"

"Yeah," she replied. "We can show you if you wa-"

"No, I know where it is."

She sighed, looking worried. "But we can help look." The two other boys nodded, agreeing with her.

"No," he said. "After school, you are all going home immediately. No biking around for your friend, no investigating, no nonsense like that. This isn't some Lord of the Rings book."

"The Hobbit," Dustin corrected him, making him feel more irritated than before.

"Stop it!" demanded Lucas, hitting his chest.

"No, YOU stop it!" he shouted, making them fight a little and bicker.

"Guys, hey!" shouted Jane. "Both of you stop it!"

"HEY!" Jim repeated louder, silencing the kids once again as he stood up in front of them. "Now, do I make myself clear?" The kids didn't answer. They didn't want to just sit around and have their friend being missing out there. "I said, do I make myself clear?"

They all didn't want to piss off the police officer, so they all said, "Yes, sir." Though that came out of their mouths, they weren't going

to do exactly that.

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Back at the diner, the man cooked the mysterious boy up a hamburger and some fries. The boy was now wearing a clean yellow shirt with the diner's logo on it. The man sat with him and saw him eating the food like he wasn't fed for weeks. The boy thought that the burger was super delicious.

"Jeez, kid," the man muttered. "Did your parents forget to feed you?" He looked up at him and didn't answer, continuing to scarf down his food. "Is that why you ran away?" No answer again. "They hurt ya?" Still no answer. "You got into the hospital, got scared, ran off, and wounded up here, right?" The boy then looked down at his food and continued eating it, full on ignoring his questions.

The man was trying to sympathize with him, but he wouldn't seem to answer, so he decided to take his burger and fries away from him, making his eyes widen in surprise. "I will give these back to you, but you have to answer my questions, alright? After that, you can have as many as you want, even some ice cream." The boy looked irritated and felt desperate, needing the food so bad. But since the man had them, he nodded.

The man nodded back. "Alright, then let me start easy." He reached his hand out to him and greeted, "My name's Benny, Benny Hammond." The boy looked at his hand with a puzzled look, so Benny got his hand and made him grab it. "See? Like this." He looked weirded out, but he reassured, "Don't worry, I got ya." He then shook his hand. "Nice to meet you. What's your name?" He didn't answer because he didn't want to.

Benny sighed and let go of his hand, but not before seeing a tattoo on his left wrist. The tattoo had the letter "M" with the number "11" on it. The boy tried to hide it from him, though he had seen it. The man sighed and asked, "M-Eleven? What does that mean?" He didn't answer, looking down at the table. "What does it mean, kid?"

He shook his head and murmured, "No..."

The man smiled a little. "Well, he can finally speak," he said to

himself before talking to the boy again. "Why no?" The boy looked at the food again, wanting it more and wanting the questions to end. Benny clicked his tongue and brought the food with him to the kitchen. "Alright, I guess you don't need any more food then."

The boy felt scared, needing the food so bad. He decided to answer, "M-Michael." The man turned to him with a slightly surprised look on his face.

"Michael? That's what the 'M' stands for?" he asked him, Michael nodding. "And the eleven?"

He pointed to himself. "Eleven," he answered, tapping his collarbone multiple times. "Michael...Eleven."

Benny nodded, though feeling unsure. He gave the boy back his food. "Here ya go." Michael then went back to ravaging the food once again. "Easy there, kiddo." Only one question ran through his mind...who was he?

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Later, Benny went to the phone to call for help while Michael still ate the food, eating another back of fries. He heard the fan rattling, making him stop and look at it. The sound was annoying him...he needed it to stop. He tilted his head down, but kept his eyes on the fan. He began to focus on it and then, it suddenly stopped. He felt thankful that his nose didn't bleed for that to happen. He continued to eat his food.

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In her home, Jane was having a family dinner with her mother and adoptive sister. The meal was meatloaf with peas and potatoes, but she wasn't eating it, more like poking it. Ms. Ives looked at her with a stern look. "Jane, eat your dinner," she commanded her.

She heavily sighed, thinking about her missing friend. "I want to go out there and find him..." she muttered.

Her mother sighed. "Listen Jane, I know you want to help find him, but the chief said-"

She replied a bit aggressively, "I don't care. I want to find him."

Her mother looked annoyed at her. "Jane, attitude."

She looked at her with a worried face. "But-"

"You're not going. End of discussion." The tomboy exhaled deeply, still poking her food. Silence roamed around the room, the other females still eating their food.

Kali decided to ask, "Hey, Mum. Is it alright if I go to Barbara's to study tonight? She feels nervous about the test and-"

"No," Ms. Ives answered, her adoptive daughter's eyes widening.

"What?! But Mum-"

"You can discuss the questions over the phone, alright?"

The teenager groaned and slouched back at her chair. "It's not...good enough, Mum!"

Ms. Ives looked at her with her stern look. "Kali, lower your voice."

Kali huffed and looked at her little adoptive sister. "This is just great. Now with your stupid friend missing, we're under house arrest."

Jane looked really mad when she said that, standing from her seat and saying, "So this is Will's fault?! Because it isn't!"

Kali stood up as well, looking at her angrily. "Then how did he get lost, hmm? Only an idiot would get lost." Jane clenched her fists, almost wanting to punch her for what she was saying.

"Kali!" shouted Ms. Ives, getting her attention and making her skin crawl. "You take that back, now."

"Yeah!" the curly-haired girl added. "It's not his fault that you can't hang out with STEVE!" Kali's eyes widened in utter shock that she even stated that.

"Steve?" asked their mother.

She nodded at her. "Kali's new boyfriend."

She gasped. "Jane, you little shit-"

Ms. Ives gasped and shouted, "Kali, language!" The teenager groaned again as she stormed up to her room. "Kali! KALI, get back here!" Both of them heard the door open and slammed shut. Ms. Ives heavily sighed as well as her biological daughter.

"Drama queen," Jane muttered under her breath.

Her mother faced her with a sharp glare. "Jane, what she said was despicable, but you're also getting out of control-"

She turned to her quickly. "Out of control?! KALI-" She pointed up the stairs. "-was out of control! I'm the only one being concerned about Will! He's my best friend!"

"Jane!" Her mother slammed the table, making her jolt back a little. "Everyone is concerned about him! Why else would there be a search party for finding him?"

The girl put a hand on her chest. "But I can't be in that search party?!"

"You have school!"

"Screw school! I want to find Will!" Before her mother could do anything, Jane stormed away to the basement to grieve. She couldn't believe this. She couldn't find her own friend?! What was wrong with the adults in this town?! She wouldn't stand by with one of her friends missing, she had to do something!

Meanwhile, Ms. Ives was alone at the table, staring at the plates left by her daughters. She placed her hands on her temples and took a deep breath. She was just trying to protect her children, her only children. She didn't want to be like Will's mother, Joyce, who was a friend and a single mother just like her. She wouldn't even fathom if one of her children goes missing, especially Jane. She sobbed a little, feeling depressed at the thought. She then suddenly remembered something:

---

*"Terry," said her ex-husband. "Terry, you're overreacting-"*

*"Overreacting?! OVERREACTING?!" she replied angrily at him, entering through the door and scaring the babysitter a little, who was on the phone. "Any sane person would see what I saw back at work and react the same!"*

*"Terry-"*

*"What?" she asked coldly. He didn't answer. "I said, WHAT?!" She then shoved him, though he looked unmoved by it. She chuckled and stated, "That's what I thought." She then stormed upstairs, not even bothering to pay the babysitter.*

---

Ms. Ives began to cry at that flashback. That argument...the days after...that one night...they all stuck with her, but she had to deal with it. She had to...for them.

...

Downstairs, Jane paced around the basement, her walkie-talkie in her hand. She was fuming, mumbling things about her mother and the police chief, "Stupid, stupid, stupid mama, stupid chief..." She then began mumbling her thoughts about how Will might have gone missing. Could it be an animal, like a bear, chasing him off? What if he saw someone dangerous and ran away from them? He should have went to home and shielded himself from that danger.

Suddenly, she came a realization. He didn't go home for protection for what he might have seen...that was it!

She sat on the couch in the basement and turned on her walkie-talkie to talk to Lucas, since he was a close neighbor. She wanted to tell him what she thought might have happened. "Lucas, are you there? Come on, it's me, Jane."

*"Yeah, this is Lucas,"* the black-haired boy replied through his own walkie-talkie.

She sighed in relief. "Okay, just say 'over' when you're done talking, alright? Over."

*"I'm done. Over."*

She then sighed again in worry. "I'm really worried about Will. Over."

She heard him sigh. *"Yeah, I know, pretty crazy. Over."*

"I was thinking of something...like how he could have casted Protection last night, but he didn't. He casted Fireball instead. Over."

There was a short bit of silence. *"And your point? Over."*

"My point is that he could have made himself safe, but he didn't. He tried the offense to protect the party instead. Over."

After a few seconds of thinking, Lucas replied, *"Meet me at ten. Over and out."* She nodded as she disconnected from him and packed a flashlight to help her find Will. She found a coat she left in the basement and put it on, since she heard from the news this morning that it would be raining that night. She went out the back door and found her bike. She hopped onto it and began to ride away.

Suddenly, she spotted somebody trying to reach up to her sister's room. She stopped and got a good look at the figure. It was Steve. He spotted her and tried to look cool, as if he's done nothing wrong. She groaned a little and rolled her eyes at him as she rode away. He wasn't the problem right now, Will's disappearance was.

...

Kali was in her room, studying her flashcards while listening to a pop radio station. She had already changed into her lavender-colored night gown. She looked pretty stressed until she suddenly heard knocking on her window, making her look to see that Steve was right out there. She gasped in surprise, standing up and approaching him.

As she opened the window for him, she whispered, "What are you doing? I told you, I'm practically under martial law in this house."

He shrugged nonchalantly. "I just figured that we'd study here," he answered in a whisper.

She shook her head at him. "No way, Steve."



"Oh, come on. You're a good student. I can't have you..." He paused to climb into the room, his girlfriend moving out of the way. "...failing this test." He finally stood up in the room, looking around the purple, girly-themed room. He looked at her with a reassuring and cute smile. "What did I tell ya? Ninja."

She smirked and quietly mouthed, "Idiot." She then closed the window so they wouldn't have anything distract them from studying...

---

In the diner, Benny began washing the dishes while Michael sat on one of the tables in the kitchen, eating spoonfuls of delicious mint ice cream. The jukebox was still playing some music in the background. He looked over at the shaved-haired boy, smiling at his enjoyment of the icy treat. "You really do like that ice cream, huh?" he asked him. The boy looked up to him and smiled a little. "A smile looks good on ya." His smile then dropped when he said that, looking confused. "Ya know, a smile?" He then shot one at him, the boy trying to imitate it. The man chuckled. "There ya go, kid."

Michael felt...happy, at the moment. This man was unlike the other adults he was around with in that bad place. Perhaps not all adults were bad, after all.

There was a sudden knock on the door, the two looking at it. Michael turned to Benny with a nervous look on his face. The man gave him a reassuring look as he wiped his hands with a hand-towel. "It's alright. Whoever's at the door, I'll tell them to shoo, to go away. Is that alright?" The boy nodded as he left the kitchen. The boy decided to look at what's happening to see.

Benny opened the door and a woman appeared before him. Apparently, she was part of "Social Services" and she was there to pick him up. Benny told her that he hadn't told him that she was coming, being a bit skittish, and that he was in the kitchen. He let her in, closing the door. "Sorry I was going to turn ya away there," he stated to her.

"Oh no, it's okay," she replied.

His back was then turned to her as he walked to the kitchen. "Say, your voice sounds different from the pho-" Suddenly, when he turned his head to her, she got out a gun with a silencer and shot him at the head. Michael gasped, tensing up in horror. She wasn't a nice lady...she had to be one of them.

He immediately hopped off of the table with the tub of ice cream and began running for the storage door. He suddenly stopped and dropped the tub when he saw two men come out of the backdoor, guns pointed at him. He was scared, absolutely terrified, but he had to do something, something to make them go away for good.

As the woman put her gun away, Dr. Brenner and Dr. Wheeler came in, looking to find the young boy. They heard the jukebox become static before hearing two men thudding in the storage room. They arrived there to see those two men dead and bleeding, the door open. That meant that M11 escaped before they could even see him.

Mr. Wheeler decided to go outside and scan the area to look for him. He couldn't find him anywhere. That boy...that stubborn little boy...

---

The three friends were biking to the forest, the flashlights on their bikes on. They spotted a stopper that was white and orange, making them stop to it and mount their bikes. "This is it," Lucas stated. All of them got off of their bikes before feeling a bit of rain dropping on them.

"Uh, guys?" Dustin asked, wiping a raindrop from his forehead. "You feel that? Maybe we should go back."

"No way," Jane replied as she got out her flashlight from her backpack and pulled up the hood of her coat to her head. "We're here now, so stay close." She then walked over the stopper with Lucas and added, "Come on. Stay on channel 6 and don't do anything stupid." The curly-haired boy let out a deep sigh before joining them, feeling worried about this...

---

In Kali's room, Steve held up a flashcard his lover made and read out loud, "The polymers that occur naturally are-"

"Starch and cellulose," she answered instantly.

He nodded and went to the next flashcard. "In a molecule of  $\text{CH}_4$ , the hydrogen atoms are spatially oriented towards the center of the—"

"Tetrahedrons."

He smiled at her, making her smile back. "Wow." He then looked at all the flashcards she made. "Christ, how many of these did you make?"

"Enough to help me pass the test." She crossed her arms. "You said you wanted to help me study."

He chuckled a little, believing that he couldn't win that battle. He then thought up of something. "How about this: you get something right, I take a part of my clothes off, but you get something wrong—"

Kali knew where he was getting at, scoffing and replying with, "Nooo, absolutely not!"

He shuffled himself closer to her. "Come on, it'll be fun."

"No it wo—"

He started reading one of her flashcards. "During fractional distillation, hydrocarbons are separated according to their—"

"Melting point," she answered confidently again.

He looked at the back of the flashcard and raised his eyebrows. "Ooo, sorry, Kal, but it's the boiling point."

She looked at him in disbelief and crossed her arms, not believing she was actually wrong. "I meant that."

He shook his head, grinning. "No you didn't." He gestured her to take off her dress, making her turn away from him and give him the hand.

"Ugh, no!"

He scooted even more closer to her and asked, "Aw, why not?" He

then embraced her from behind, making her face heat up.

"It's...cheating! I'm only wearing panties under this!"

He smiled in a seductive manner. "Wow...really?" His voice was sultry, making her heart race and her face heat up even more.

She looked back at him and murmured, "Really." The two of them had their faces close to each other, so they closed the gap by kissing. The more they kissed, the more they wanted each other. Kali turned her body towards his and placed one hand behind his head to keep him from breaking the kiss. He then set her on the bed, continuing to make out with her.

As he slowly grabbed the bottom of her night gown and lifted it up, she suddenly realized something and broke their kiss. He looked puzzled. "What?" he asked. "Your mom's not here, right? Didn't you say she works a night shift too?"

She pushed him off of her and stood up, scowling at him. "Was this your plan all along? To come to my room and...seduce me or some shit?"

He shook his head. "What? No, no-"

"Steve." He stopped shaking his head. "I'm not Laurie, or Amy, or that slut Betty."

He chuckled. "Right, you're Kali," he answered, making her chuckle a little at his stupid answer. "A smart, beautiful, sexy..."

She looked away from him. "Indian..."

"Hey." She looked at him as he began to caress her face. "My mom always told me that beauty comes in all colors. You are no exception to that." She smiled at him again. That sounded cheesy, but sweet to say. He playfully frowned and got her teddy bear. "Bad Steve..." he said for the teddy bear. "Don't do seduce Miss Kali like that. You'll make her upset at you..."

She began to laugh, now enjoying his company again. "Steve Harrington, you're an idiot," she said, keeping her smile.

He smiled back at her once again. "Kali Ives, you're beautiful," he replied to her. Both of them decided to keep studying, so Steve picked up the flashcards to quiz Kali again.

---

It began to rain hard outside. Thankfully, the kids were wearing jackets to shield them from the rain with their hoods. Their flashlights were on, wandering around the woods to look for their friend. "Will!" shouted Jane.

"Byers!" shouted Lucas.

"I got your X-Men 134!" shouted Dustin. The kids felt like they were looking for him for too long, especially the curly-haired boy. "Guys, I REALLY think we should turn back!"

"Are you kidding me, Dustin?!" the African-American kid asked in an annoyed tone. "You wanna be a sissy, then go home!"

"I'm just trying to be realistic!"

"No, you're just being a big, fat sissy!"

"Hey!"

"Shut up, you two!" Jane yelled at them, making them stop their argument. She normally doesn't yell at her friends a lot, especially in one day. That was because her patience was thinning and her worry was increasing a lot.

After a moment of silence, Dustin asked, "Don't ya think that maybe Will ran away because he saw something bad? And we're going to the spot where he was last seen? With no weapons or anything?"

While he was talking, the tomboy heard a rustling noise, making her focus on it. However, Dustin's talking was making that difficult making her shout, "Dustin, shut up!" He shot back.

"Jesus...am I the only reasonable one here?!"

"Shut up!" she shouted again as she stopped, making the two other boys stop. They all heard a rustling noise not too far from them. They

became a little scared and looked around.

"Wh-what is that?!" Dustin exclaimed.

The rustling noise sounded closer, so the trio shined their flashlights at the one behind the noise. They saw a boy around their age with a shaved head and freckles across his face, wearing only a yellow, oversized shirt. He was all wet and he was shivering, both from the cold and the fact that he was caught by them. Jane's eyes widened at the sight of him. For just a second, she thought it was Will, but he wasn't their friend. But...

"Uh, that's not Will..." Dustin stated.

"Ya think?" replied Lucas. "Who are you?!"

Michael, on the other hand, could barely see through the light shining at him. He couldn't decipher what the people with those lights were, but they didn't sound like adults. Maybe they were with the bad people? Or maybe they are nice, like Benny? He didn't know, but either way...he couldn't move.

---

**Done! What do you think? Any mistakes or typos?**

**Thank you guys for the reviews, especially PlaidDino with the criticism! I'll take it to heart. Keep the reviews coming, follow, favorite, and I'll see you in the next chapter!**

**\*EDITS of 06/16/19:**

**-Connected two paragraphs where Jane speaks into the ham shack**

**-Added ellipses in "Only one question ran through his mind...who was he?" and "The sound was annoying him...he needed it to stop."**

**-Changed "right?" to "alright?"**

**-Changed "scoffed" to "huffed"**

**-Removed "down" in "looking at her angrily."**

**-Capitalized Steve**

**-Made Jane point up the stairs when she says "KALI,"**

- Added "a friend" in "She didn't want to be like Will's mother, Joyce, who was a single mother just like her."
- Removed the F-bomb Terry drops because I forgot that this was a TV-14 show.
- Removed ellipsis in "She had to...for them."
- Removed "She had a lot of questions to ask of him."
- Changed "scoffed" to "smirked"
- Removed description of Benny saying "It's alright. Whoever's at the door, I'll tell them to shoo, to go away. Is that alright?"
- Removed "Those bad people..."
- Changed a couple typos
- Removed "she answered confidently before teasing," and replaced it with her crossing her arms.
- Removed "he stated."
- Made Kali just look away from Steve when he's complimenting her.
- Removed "he muttered."
- Replaced "He looked a little like Will" with "For just a second, she thought it was Will,"

### 3. Michael Eleven

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

In the basement of Jane's house that same night, the trio were there as well as Michael. All of them were wet, but Michael was the most soaked out of all of them. The kids all had their hoods down, their hair partially wet from the rain. Michael was wearing a coat Jane wore before, breathing heavily and still shivering a little. "Hey..." the tomboy said, making him look up at her. "Is there a number we can call? For your parents?" He didn't answer her because he didn't want "them" to know.

"What happened to your hair, dude?" asked Dustin, now making him look at him. "You have cancer or something?"

"Did you run away?" Lucas asked, the boy looking at him now.

"Are you in trouble?" asked Jane.

"Is that blood?" Lucas and the others noticed a small red stain on his shirt, the African-American boy reaching for it before Jane smacked it away.

"Hey! You're freaking him out!" she exclaimed.

"HE'S freaking ME out!" he retorted.

"Maybe he's deaf," the curly-haired boy suggested before clapping his hands in front of Michael. He shot back a little at that motion. Dustin shook his head. "Never mind."

Jane sighed and spread her arms out as a notion to tell them stop. "Enough, you two! He's just cold and scared." She then looked around to see a laundry basket with some of her clothes in it. She walked towards it and grabbed a black long-sleeved shirt and a pair of grey sweatpants. She approached the boy and handed him them. "Here. These are fresh from the dryer, so you should be warm and comfortable in them."



He took the clothes from Jane and decided to rub them on one of his cheeks. She was right, they were warm. He then put them down next to him and stood up, taking off the coat before proceeding to take off his shirt. Jane turned back in shock, covering her eyes and exclaiming, "Ah!" Lucas and Dustin then stopped him from doing it by approaching him, grabbing his arms, and saying off-sync, "Whoa, no, no, no, no..." Michael looked at them with a very puzzled look.

"Just some good advice, buddy," Lucas stated. "Don't take off your clothes in front of a girl." He pointed at Jane, her back facing them. Michael looked at her and felt bad.

"Yeah," Dustin added before looking suspicious of him. "Unless you wanna have sex with her." The shaved-haired boy looked at him in confusion. Lucas smacked his friend's arm in disapproval, him flinching back. "Ow, what? It's true!"

"U-um..." Jane murmured under her breath before pointing at the bathroom in the basement. "Th-there's the bathroom. You can have some privacy in there, alright?" She turned back to him, hoping he would finally answer.

He didn't, but understood what she was saying. He took the clothes and walked into the bathroom. He looked around in the room before Jane walked to the door and proceeded to close it. He stopped her, grabbing the door with his hand. She looked at him with a puzzled expression. "You don't want it closed?" she asked him.

He looked at her with a worried expression. "No," he answered in a quiet voice, almost like hers.

Her eyes widened a little at him speaking. "Wow, you can finally speak now." She smiled a little before asking, "Okay, then...how about I close the door to about..." She then slowly brought the door to its locked place, Michael's hand still on it. There was then an inch of a gap. "...here?"

"Yes," he answered. She smiled at him once again before walking back to her friends. He still looked around the bathroom before changing. So perhaps they were nice, after all?

...

"This is very mental," Dustin said worriedly.

"At least he can speak," Jane replied.

"'Yes' and 'No?'" Lucas asked. "Even a three-year-old can say more."

The tomboy crossed her arms before her curly-haired friend spoke, "He tried to get naked in front of you, like it's nothing." He then made the motion of him taking off his shirt, Jane sighing.

"I think there's something seriously wrong with him, like wrong in the head." Lucas then pointed at his head.

"Yeah, like..." Dustin did the motion again, his cap falling down. "In front of you."

"I know," she said, irritated.

"Maybe he escaped from Pennhurst," the black-haired boy suggested.

"What?"

"The loony bin from Kurley County?"

Dustin grinned. "What, you got a lotta family there?"

He looked at him in disapproval. "Bite me." Jane took a deep breath as he continued, "But really, when you think about it, it would explain his shaved head and why he's so crazy."

"And why he went like..." Dustin did the motion once again. "In front of-"

"Yeah, I get it," she replied in a voice sharp as nails.

"At this point, he's an escapee, a psycho," Lucas went on.

"Like Michael Myers?" asked Dustin, looking horrified.

"Yeah, exactly!"

Jane sighed once again and put a hand on her head. "We can't just leave him in the storm like that."

"If I were you, I would because we went to find Will, not another problem!"

She looked at him angrily before Dustin suggested, "We should tell your mom when she comes back."

Lucas nodded. "Second that."

She looked at both of them in sheer disapproval. "Are you guys crazy?!"

Lucas looked shocked when she asked that. "Oh, WE'RE crazy?! Yeah, like keeping some other boy here is perfectly normal!"

She rolled her eyes at him. "We weren't supposed to be out tonight, remember?!"

"So?"

"SO, if you tell Mama, and then she tells your mom, and then she tells Dustin's mom..."

Lucas then realized what she was saying. "Our houses become Alcatraz."

"And we'll never find Will," Dustin added.

She nodded. "Exactly."

Her curly-haired friend looked at him. "Still..." He did the motion once again.

She groaned. "Alright, Dustin!"

He held his hands up. "I'm just saying, a guy usually doesn't do that unless he wants to have sex with you." The tomboy looked at him in disgust while the African-American boy hit his arm again. "Ow, seriously..."

Jane took a deep breath again and said, "Okay, so here's my plan. He'll stay here for the night."

Dustin looked shocked. "You're REALLY letting some other boy-"

"Dustin!" He shut the hell up after that shout. "In the morning, he'll sneak around my house, go to the front door, and ring the doorbell. Mama will answer and she'll know what to do. Once she sends him back to Pennhurst or wherever he came from, that solves this problem. And tomorrow night, we go out and look for Will again." The two boys looked at each other, communicating through glances about her plan.

...

They put on their coats again and began to walk back upstairs before stopping. They saw Jane give a fully-dressed Michael a yellow sleeping bag and a pillow. He was under a small fort she constructed in a few seconds, having a bed sheet on a table as curtains. They both looked worried about their only female friend. "Do you really think he's a psycho?" Dustin asked Lucas.

He sighed and answered, "I wouldn't keep him in my house." They both then went upstairs to leave. "She's probably keeping him there because she thinks he's cute or something."

Dustin chuckled. "Yeah, probably." He looked at him. "Don't know any chicks that dig a buzz-cut though." Lucas just shrugged at him.

...

"Hey, um...I never asked for your name," Jane said to Michael. He looked at her, understanding what she said. He pulled up his sleeve and positioned his arm sideways. On his wrist was the tattoo Benny saw, "M11". Her eyes widened at the sight of it. "Is that a real..." She reached her hand out to touch it, but he pulled it back from her, looking at her in objection. She shook her head. "S-sorry. I just never seen a kid with a tattoo before." She then sat on the ground, crossing her legs. "What does it mean though? M-Eleven?"

He pointed at himself and answered, "Michael...Eleven."

"Your real name's Michael?" He nodded at her, making her nod back. "Alright, then...my name is Jane. Jane Ives." She pointed at herself before dropping her hand to her lap.

He looked a bit curious. "Jane?" She nodded. He had heard that name before...at the bad place...but he couldn't remember when.

"Maybe we can call you Mike. Mike is short for Michael, after all." He liked the sound of "Mike", so he nodded at her again. She smiled at him. "Great." She stood up. "Well, good night, Mike."

As she was about to drop the curtains on him, he replied, "Good night, Jane." She stopped where she was. She could feel her heart skip a beat when he said that. She wondered why. She finally dropped the curtains on him and left the basement. She hoped that he wouldn't leave when she comes back. That would cause more problems than intended.

When she left, Mike laid down on his side and curled up. It was warmer in this place than outside...almost like the diner. He frowned and arched his brows upward, almost looking to cry. It didn't help that it was dark and thunder was rolling in. He shook like a leaf and closed his eyes in fear, hoping to get through this night without any more trouble.

---

The next morning, everyone in the Ives house was up, three pieces of waffles popping up from a toaster. Jane wore her coat, a black shirt with a grey logo on it and a red long-sleeved shirt underneath, dark loose fit jeans, and red and white Nikes. She always loved Eggos, so she wondered if Mike would like them too. She put one of the waffles inside the pocket of her coat while placing two of the others on her plate.

...

At the table, the tomboy began eating her waffles at a fast pace, cutting and eating whole of the pieces she cut out. Terry looked concerned for her daughter eating like that while Kali just looked disgusted. "Oh my God, Jane," she said to her. "I know you love Eggos, but stop that. That's gross."

As she swallowed the chewed piece in her mouth, she looked at her in an annoyed expression and asked, "So, did you do some good studying last night?"

She scoffed. "I actually did."

Teasingly, Jane asked, "You were studying for your sex-ed test, right?" Kali looked at her in utter objection. Both kicked each other at the shins under the table.

"Hey!" Terry said loudly, making the girls stop and look at her. "Stop it, both of you." Both of them sighed deeply and continued eating their food, still annoyed with each other.

...

Still in the basement, Mike began to mess around with Jane's walkie-talkie he found when he woke up, turning the knob and listening to the static that came out of it. He then heard footsteps coming down, stiffening himself and turning it off. The footsteps came closer and the curtains were pulled up, showing that it was Jane, making him feel relieved.

She looked at her walkie-talkie on his hand and smiled. "Oh, you found my super-com?" she asked him. "It's pretty cool, huh?" He looked back down at it. "I use that to talk to my friends, mostly Lucas because he lives so close. The signal's pretty weak though." He looked up at her again, not saying a word. He kind of reminded her of how she was in school, quiet and timid. She was always like that with the exception of her friends, since they broke her out of her shell.

Jane took out the waffle she had in her coat pocket and gave it to him. "Here's your breakfast. It's an Eggo's waffle, my favorite." He looked at it and grabbed it, taking a bite out of it and chewing. He nodded, thinking it tasted good, making her smile again. It slowly disappeared, however, as she decided to tell him her plan.

She sat on the floor again and said, "So, this is going to sound pretty weird, but..." Mike looked at her with a puzzled look as she pointed to the door. "I need you to go out there, and then go to my front door and ring the doorbell." He looked back at her with the same look.

"My mama will answer the door and you will tell her that you're lost and need help. You can't tell her about what happened last night or that you know about me. Do you understand?"

Mike looked at her plainly, making her deeply sigh and give him a smile. "It's not that big of a deal, okay? We'll just pretend to meet each other again and my mama knows who to ca-"

"No," he answered, cutting her off. She looked surprised, not expecting that answer from him.

"No?"

He shook his head. "No." He took another bite of the waffle and began to chew it.

"You don't want my mama to call for help?" He shook his head again as he swallowed his bite. She wondered why before reaching a conclusion. "Are you...in trouble?" His face turned worried, making her feel worried. "Who...exactly are you in trouble with?"

He looked down at his waffle with sad eyes, muttering, "Bad..."

"Bad? Bad people?" He slowly nodded. She began to worry even more about this situation. "Do these bad people...want to hurt you?" He then formed a finger gun and pointed it to his head...before pointing it to hers. That gesture told her the answer, her eyes widening.

He put his hand down and asked, "Understand?" She nodded. This situation got deeper than she or the boys anticipated.

"Jane! Where are you?!" Terry shouted from upstairs. "We're going to be late!"

That made her jolt a little and shout back, "I'm coming!" She turned back to Mike and said, "I need to go. I'll come back, just stay here." Before he could answer, she dropped the curtains and began running upstairs. The freckled boy frowned, worrying about her and his safety.

---

Back in the laboratories, Dr. Brenner and Dr. Wheeler walked with

two of their best operatives. "When was this?" asked Dr. Wheeler.

"Last night, two miles away from here," the woman answered.

Dr. Brenner looked at his watch. "And the boy?" he asked.

"Still missing," answered another agent.

...

In the recording room, both doctors heard Joyce Byers's phone call, hearing her mention that she heard her son on the phone and heard something similar to a growl. Both of them looked at each other, worried about the secret they were keeping within the labs.

---

In Hawkins High School, Kali wore a white long-sleeved shirt, dark skinny jeans, and flats. Barbara was holding her flashcards, quizzing her while they were walking. "When alpha particles go through gold foil, they become-" the red-haired female read to her friend.

"Unoccupied space," the dark-haired girl answered instantly.

Barbara nodded and went to the next card when suddenly, someone came by and snatched the cards away from her. She shot back a little in shock, both her and Kali looking at who took them. It just so happened to be Steve. "Hey!"

"Hey, indeed," he replied as another guy his age with a bunch of freckles on his face appeared, poking Barbara at the ear and making her flinch. Another girl around their age joined him too. They were called Tommy and Carol. "I think you studied enough, Kal."

The black-haired girl sighed. "Steve-" she began.

"Seriously, I know you got this." He then put the flashcards in his back pocket, Kali crossing her arms and looking irritated by him. "Now, onto more important things." He grinned. "My dad's out of town for a conference and my mom's with him because she doesn't trust him."

"Which is a good call," Tommy added.



"So, are you in?"

The Indian girl looked confused. "In for...?"

"Come on," Carol said. "No parents? Big house?"

Through those implications, that meant... "A party?"

"Ding, ding, ding!" Tommy chuckled a little.

"But it's a Tuesday."

"But it's a Tuesday," the freckled guy imitated, mocking her voice and laughing. "Come on!" Carol joined him on the laughing.

Steve let out a big sigh and looked at her. "It'll be just us. Low-key, no one would know. You in or out?"

Kali began to think. She was still under house arrest, but once her mother leaves for her night shift...

"Oh my God, look," Carol said. All of them looked where she was looking, seeing an auburn-haired guy pinning a missing poster for Will Byers. It was the boy's older brother, Jonathan, the school loner.

"Well, that's depressing," Steve commented, frowning.

Kali began to feel bad for him and suggested, "Maybe we should tell him something-"

"Girl, I don't think he speaks," the red-haired girl stated.

"How much to bet that he killed him?" Tommy asked. Kali's boyfriend punched his shoulder in disapproval.

"Shut up..."

Since these guys didn't want to do it, then she will. She walked towards him and stopped next to him, greeting, "Hey."

He quickly turned his head to her as he finished pinning the poster. "Uh...hey," he greeted back a bit awkwardly.

Kali took a deep breath and said to him, "I just wanted to say that he'll be found and he'll be fine. I know it."

He nodded at her and smiled a little. "Yeah...thanks."

"Just don't worry about it too much, alright?" She moved her head to point to everybody. "Everyone's thinking about you." He nodded again as a reply, though his smile disappeared. The bell rang, making everyone but them hurry to their classrooms. Kali didn't want to miss her class, so she began to leave as well. "I need to go, but good luck."

"Thanks," he replied as he saw her go. He let out a deep sigh and looked at the poster again, mumbling, "How can I not worry so much about him...?" He didn't know and he didn't care, not taking her advice to heart. He then left as the principal made an announcement about an assembly for his little brother.

---

In the middle school, the warning bell rang as some kids took their seats and put their backpacks next to them. As Dustin and Lucas did so, both noticed the empty seat next to Lucas, Jane's seat. "Oh no, this is weird," the curly-haired boy stated.

"I told you, her stupid plan failed," the black-haired boy replied.

"Wait, didn't you like her plan?"

"Yeah, but it was obviously stupid. Otherwise, she'd be here."

Dustin grinned nervously. "Man, if her mom knew she had a different boy stay over last night-"

"Then she's in some deep shit."

His friend then whispered to her, "What if he tried to sleep with her last night?" Lucas groaned at his question, thinking it was stupid since he talked about that last night...yet it WAS possible, since he was a psycho in his eyes...

"He does, we kick his ass."

He nodded. "Exactly. No one sleeps with our friend!" He realized he

said that out loud, a good chunk of the class looking at him. He face-palmed and muttered, "Goddamn it..."

Outside of class, Troy and James heard that, making them snicker and leave for their class...

Lucas sighed and face-palmed as well. "Great, Dustin. Just great."

"Sor-ry!" He groaned. "Maaan, what happens when my mom hears about this?"

Lucas looked at him in disbelief. "Jane wouldn't rat us out like that, I know that for sure."

"I dunno, man..."

"Listen." Dustin looked at his friend. "By the time school ends, that strange boy will be back at the loony-bin and we can focus on what really matters: finding Will." The final bell then rang and class began. Lucas was keen on Mike being gone while Dustin remains unsure.

---

As Terry left for her day job, Jane hid behind one of the trees near her home. When the car was gone, she biked her way over to her home, getting into the backyard and into the basement to visit Mike again.

Meanwhile, as Terry wore an old-fashioned green and white waitress uniform and was driving to downtown to work in Hideaway as a waitress, she was still worrying about her daughters. Kali wanted to visit her boyfriend while Jane wanted to find Will. Both of them were mad at her last night, but they didn't know how dangerous it could be outside, especially with a child missing. Losing her children would be the worst thing that has ever happened to her. Especially if HE broke his promise and...

And...

Terry began thinking of something as she stopped at the exit of the neighborhood. What if...he took him, took Will? She shook her head. Why would he? He had...more than enough for that damn...ugh. Maybe it was just her undying hatred towards him and his endeavors

that made her think of the most ridiculous shit. She heavily sighed and looked to her left before turning a right into the road.

---

Now with her coat off, Jane arrived with Mike upstairs, him looking around at her home. "Do you need a drink?" she asked him. "We got orange juice, skim milk...um..." She tried to think of what else her family had. She turned to the shaved-haired boy and saw him wander into the living room. He set his eyes on the TV in there, looking at it closely and trailing his fingers down on the buttons. She smiled a little and stood right next to him. "This is the TV. It's what this living room is for." She then placed her hand on top of the TV. "It's a 22-inch, bigger than Dustin's. Pretty cool, right?"

Michael nodded though he didn't understand much, then looked back at the pictures set up above the home's fireplace. Some had baby pictures of either her or Kali, others from childhood and recently. He looked to see both Kali and Jane from a year ago during a wedding reception, dressed up formally in dresses. He smiled at the picture. "Pretty," he said.

Jane blushed a little and felt her heart beating a little faster at that compliment, nervously smiling a little. "Uh...thanks?" she replied, sounding unsure since there might be the possibility that he was talking about Kali. She shook off her nervousness and continued, "That girl is my older sister, Kali." He thought that was weird, since they didn't look related.

He then looked at a family picture with not only her and Kali, but also Miss Ives. All of them wore sweaters, Terry and Jane wearing formal ladies' pants while Kali wore a skirt. "That's my mama," she said. "She takes care of the both of us." He looked closely at Terry. He had an odd feeling that she looked familiar...

He turned to her and asked, "Dad?"

She frowned, shook her head, and shrugged. "Never knew him. Mama said it's for the best." It wasn't the first time she was asked if she had a father, but the thought of not knowing about him kind of made her feel upset somehow. She always wondered why she never knew about him. He thought that was weird as well, since he had a dad...

"What are your parents like?" she asked him as he focused his attention on a recliner chair. "Or do you live with one of them, like me?" He didn't answer because he didn't listen, his sole focus on the chair. She noticed that and went to it. "That's my mama's La-Z-Boy. When she's tired from work, she usually sits here and goes to sleep." She looked at him and suggested, "You can try it if you want. You don't have to, but it's cozy."

He wondered if it really was, so he sat on it and shuffled a little in it. She was right again, it was pretty comfortable. She walked to the side of it and had her hand on the side handle. He looked curiously at her, making her look back at him. "Hold on," she said. "It might surprise you a little." He wondered again what she meant by that before turning the handle and reclining the chair. He gasped in shock, his heart racing a little at the sudden change. This actually felt better for him, making him smile and chuckle a little. She giggled.

"That's the fun part." She then turned the chair back to normal and let go of the handle. "How about you try it now?" He nodded as he put his hand on the handle and turned it, reclining the chair again. He began laughing with her. He never enjoyed something so much before, especially with someone else.

---

**Done! How was this? Any typos I might've missed?**

**In this AU, I'm thinking that Lucas and Dustin would be like overprotective brothers to Jane, so that's why they're very concerned about her keeping a boy in her house, especially when he was about to undress himself in front of her.**

**There will also be more Terry-centric scenes during this fanfic (of course, I mean, it's a role-swap AU and I did say she's somehow connected to the events going on) and I'm thinking of having someone else close to her visit her for a few days. Can you guys guess who it is? ;)**

**Since I'm on Thanksgiving break now, I should publish more chapters of this every day, so stay tuned! :D I'll see you in the next chapter!**

**\*EDITS of 06/20/19:**

- Replaced "stated" with "replied"**
- Fixed a typo**
- Removed "she said to them." and "he replied."**
- Removed "at" in "And tomorrow night"**
- Added "but he couldn't remember when."**
- Replaced "Ms. Ives" with "Terry"**
- Changed "purple" to "white"**
- Replaced "scoffed" with "sighed" and "accent" with "voice"**
- Removed "he stated.", "skinny" in "the red-haired girl stated.", and "he muttered."**
- Changed Terry's uniform colors from red and yellow to green and white**
- Replaced "stated" with "said" and "said the tomboy" with "she said."**

## 4. I Promise

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

In Hideaway, Terry was serving customers that took tables beer and breakfast. The TV was on, talking about things she didn't care enough to listen to. Despite her being the oldest out of the waitresses that worked there, she was hired because she still had her youthful beauty through the wrinkles she began to have. As much as she hated that, at least she got her one way of paying bills and for her daughters. The other...she wished not to think about often.

Suddenly, the door to the pub opened and revealed a woman with short dirty-blonde hair, some of it tied to the back, and brown eyes. She wore a flowery, collared red dress and red heels to match. She also had a brown purse over her shoulder. She looked around the pub before seeing Terry, the woman surprised to see her there. She smiled at her and walked to her. Terry smiled back and hugged her as soon as she got close to her.

"Glad to see you, Becky!" she greeted with joy.

"Feeling's mutual, Terry," the woman replied before the hug was broken.

The mother turned to the back and shouted, "Hey, Joan! Can you take over for me for a bit?"

...

The two sat together at an empty table and talked to one another. "So, how's the city?" Terry asked her sister.

She laughed a little before answering, "Noisy." She took out a pack of cigarettes and took out one, putting the tip of it in her mouth. She then got out a lighter and lit the end up. "I can hear goddamn traffic everywhere. I miss the quiet here." She then burnt the end and blew out smoke.

The waitress scoffed. "Come on, it's cleaner than here."

Becky chuckled again. "Maybe, but at least here, you can tell who's slimy 'n who isn't. Ain't the case there." She then smoked it again.

Terry laughed at her complaining. "Well, that's what you get for marrying a guy with a good job and a good family."

The smoker placed her cigarette onto an ashtray set on the table. "I guess."

That made her think of something. "Why are you here?"

Becky looked up at her. "What?"

"Why did you travel all the way here without your husband?"

Becky laughed again before pointing behind her. "Sonuva bitch didn't want me to leave alone." Terry looked outside and saw a nice-looking baby-blue convertible with a man around her sister's age that looked better than the others in town, looking around. "Convinced the in-laws to have him take some days off as a break." The short-haired woman sighed. "Now I can't seem to leave by myself without him coming with me..."

She looked a bit sorry for her, seeing the bit of irritation that was shown on her face. "Becky..."

She shook her head and faced her sister. "Anyway, I'm not here to talk about me," she stated as she got out another cigarette and smiled at her. "I came here to stay with you and the girls for a week see how you're all doin' since I tied the knot."

Terry nervously scoffed. "Well, Becky...this isn't the best time," she replied, making her sister concerned.

"Why not?" she asked her, lighting her new cigarette.

*"Another news story, it has been two days now since a little boy named Will Byers has gone missing from Hawkins," the newswoman said at the right time, the two women looking at the TV. "Search parties are still out to find him, but with no luck as of far."*



Terry let out a deep sigh, reminded about the dinner the other night again. Becky looked terrible hearing about the news, smoking her cigarette. "Damn...I heard about a missing kid on the way here, but missing FROM here?" She then tapped the ashes into the ashtray.

The waitress solemnly nodded at her. "Yeah, exactly."

Becky turned to her with a shocked look of realization. "That's Joyce's son, right? One of Jane's friends from the wedding?" She nodded, making her smoke once again in worry. "The poor woman and the poor girl must be shook."

"I'm sure Joyce is. And Jane..." She drew her lips to a thin line. "She wouldn't have yelled at me last night if she wasn't."

Becky looked sad at her and grabbed her arm, squeezing it gently for support. "Aw, Terry..."

She shook her head. "Kali was mad at me last night too because she wanted to visit...someone from school. I just want to protect them, you know? Letting them out while there's a missing kid, I..."

"Hey," she said softly, making her look at her. "It's alright. They just don't realize that yet. They are still young and naïve, Terry, like you and I when we were their age." She was correct, they were still young. She still had a bad feeling in her chest though. "Sooner or later, they'll realize that you were just being their mother, not their obstacle. Make sure you give them that message, alright?"

She nodded, thinking she made a good point. "Thanks, Becky."

She gave her a reassuring smile. "What can't a sister like me do?" They both giggled before hearing the door open. They both turned back to see Becky's husband poking out of it.

"Rebecca," he said in a rather demanding voice, gesturing her to leave with his head.

She groaned a little and smoked once more before setting her cigarette onto the ashtray and putting her pack back in her purse. "We'll ride around town for a bit, then settle in your home," she explained before standing up from her chair. "If ya like, you can hand

me the key to your house."

Luckily, Terry had a spare in her wallet in case she lost her own for some reason, so she got it out from the pocket of her dress and gave it to her. "Don't you dare lose this or you'll owe me," she warned in a bit of a playful tone.

"Gotcha." She then waved her goodbye as she went to her husband and they both left the pub. Terry let out yet another sigh. She hoped that everything could go fine, though it never happens, but a little hope's hurt no one, right?

---

At the Byers home, a man dressed as an electrician knocked on the door. When no one answered, it was clear for everyone else in his vehicle to come out. A few people, including the two doctors, came out in white hazmat suits. The two hope to investigate and find the answer to two problems: the location of the secret and the location of M11.

They walked into the backyard and use devices to sense if the secret was around there. Dr. Wheeler's device beeped a lot when he arrived at the small warehouse. "Martin," he said to Dr. Brenner, getting his attention. The man walked to him and sensed his device beeping a lot as well. The two men nodded at each other as the dark-haired man opened the door, the two roaming inside.

It was dark and musty, as expected in a home like the Byers'. The two looked around at separate areas of the warehouse. Dr. Wheeler then recognized something on the bottom-right of the right wall. He crouched down and saw a sort of substance leaking from the gaps in the walls. Dr. Brenner saw that he was observing it and saw more of that substance in the upper-right of the wall.

"Incredible..." he muttered.

"It was undoubtedly here," Dr. Wheeler stated. They both began to think where else it might have gone. It might lead to M11...

---

The two kids were finally up in Jane's room as she set down a Yoda

character piece and did her best impression of him to Mike. "Ready are you? What knows you of ready?" He looked a bit weirded out by that. "This little guy's name is Yoda," she explained in her normal voice. "He has the ability to move things with his mind, like..." She then slapped some of her pieces from the board. "Whoosh!" The boy then looked at her trophy case and began to approach it. Unaware of that, Jane then picked up a toy T-Rex. "And this is my dinosaur, Roary. I call him that because he roars if you press this." She pressed a button that made it roar a couple of times.

Mike didn't pay attention, looking at the trophies in curiosity and a bit of awe. She saw him looking at them, so she put her dinosaur down and stood next to him, looking at the trophies as well. "These are all of the science fair trophies my friends and I won. We got first place every year except for last year. We got third because Mr. Clarke said it was too political." He smiled a little at the looks of the trophies. He then saw a picture of Jane, Lucas, Dustin, and Will smiling and holding one of the first-place trophies together.

His smile suddenly dropped when he saw Will, making Jane look concerned. "Mike?" He then pointed a finger at him in the photo, making her eyes widen. Could he know of him? "Y-you know Will?" He didn't answer, looking aghast. "Did you see him? Last night? On the road?" He still didn't answer, but she figured that it was correct. The freckled boy did see his face once a couple days ago...

All of a sudden, they both heard a car approaching the home. The curly-haired tomboy looked very puzzled. "What? Mama doesn't usually get out of work this early," she stated as she approached the window. She didn't see her mother's car approaching the driveway...but instead...some guy with an expensive-looking convertible with his wife in the next seat. She muttered, "Who the..." As she narrowed her eyes when the man parked, she suddenly saw Becky's face, making her gasp and widen her eyes. "Auntie?!"

"Auntie?" Mike asked, not knowing the word.

"Auntie Becky, my mama's sister." Why was she visiting? She hadn't have a clue. She was in a state of panic, thinking of what to do. She thought that maybe she didn't have the keys, her mother only had one, or so she thought.

She quickly grabbed Mike's hand and swung the door open. "Let's go! They shouldn't see us!" She then dragged him out of the room before getting on his feet and running with her.

As the two descended down the stairs, they immediately stopped at the sound of the door being unlocked and being opened. Jane cursed under her breath and ran back up with him. When they got it, Becky and her husband heard the sounds, looking suspicious and wary. "Who's there?" the woman called out.

"It's just me, Auntie!" the tomboy replied before she thought twice about it, now regretting it.

She looked absolutely confused. "Jane? Why aren't you in school?" She and her husband then heard the door close, both looking at each other. He shrugged.

"Maybe she's skipping," he said bluntly. She began to worry about her.

...

Jane quickly closed the door and dragged Mike to her closet, opening it up. She turned to him and said, "Stay in here. I'll come back as soon as I can, okay?" He looked worried, staring at the closet and feeling something bad about it. "You have to stay in here or my auntie will find you and she might call the cops!" He didn't want to be caught, but at the same time, he didn't want to be in there. "I won't tell her about you, I promise."

"Pr-promise?" he asked, unfamiliar with the word.

"It's something you can't break, no matter what."

"Jane, what is going on?!" shouted her aunt from downstairs.

She grabbed his shoulders and asked one more time, "Please?"

His heart began racing, but he nodded. He would be caught, otherwise. He went into the closet and faced her. He was about to say something to her, but then she repeated, "I'll come back soon, okay?" She then closed the door and got out of the room and downstairs to

see her aunt and her new uncle.

His heart began to race faster as he looked around in the darkness of the closet, feeling the trapped, cold air inside. He began panting heavily, getting goosebumps and remembering something of his past:

---

*"NO!" he screamed in what looked like a scientific facility. Two men were tightly holding him up as he struggled to get out of their grip, kicking his legs and turning back, tears streaming from his eyes. He saw Dr. Brenner come out of a room and look at him with an apathetic face. "DOCTOR, PLEASE! PLEASE!" He then saw Dr. Wheeler come out and stand next to him, also looking apathetic. He looked terribly forlorn as he yelled, "DAD!" He didn't move, only standing next to his fellow doctor and seeing his crying son being taken away. "DAD! HELP!" He still didn't do anything for him. "HELP ME!"*

*The men then carried him to a room with no windows and threw him in there. He scrambled to his feet and tried to get out, but the men closed the door before he could. It became dark...cold...and trapped. He still cried and began banging at the door, crying out several times, "DAD!" He banged the door multiple times for a very long time. He stopped and crawled to a corner, curled himself up, and began crying and sobbing. "Dad..."*

---

He was crying at the memory, sobbing a little as he sank to the floor and covered his face with his hands, trying to wipe the tears off.

...

Jane sat with Becky on the couch downstairs, talking to her while her husband roamed around the ground floor of the home. "I just...uh...didn't feel good this morning," she lied to her. "I woke up with a bad headache and...uh...my throat felt icky, so...I just...didn't want to go to school because I thought I was sick and-"

Her aunt placed a hand on her shoulder. "Jane," she said, making her stop.

She looked at her. "Yes, Auntie?"

She began to chuckle. "When I was your age, I told your granny the same thing and what did she say?" The tomboy shrugged. "That it was a load of horseshit and that I should go to school anyway because I was just damn fine." Jane giggled a little, Becky grinning before ruffling her hair a little. "Jane, hun, you don't need to lie to me. I won't even tell your mother. It'll just be our little secret."

Jane began grinning a little. "One of our little secrets, anyway," she replied. In the past, she had told Becky some things she didn't want her sister or her mom to know and she kept them to this very day.

"I met your mother before I came here. The news about your friend came up and she elaborated for me." She looked at her with a shocked expression. "If you're skipping school because of him, I don't blame you. I can't imagine how you might feel like right now."

Jane heavily sighed and frowned. "Yeah...he's a good friend..." She looked like she was about to cry.

Becky hugged her tightly but gently and patted her head. "There, there now. Your uncle Carl and I'll be staying here for a week." She then let go of the hug. "For this week, I'll be right here when you need me."

She smiled at her and hugged her again, making her hug back. "Thanks, Auntie."

She smiled back at her. "Anything for my cute little niece." She felt a bit better since her aunt was there, but then there was Michael.

Speaking of him, both the females, even Carl, heard a thud from her room. "What was that?" he asked.

Jane quickly thought up of a lie. "I-I think something from my room dropped," she answered as she sat up from the couch. "I'll go get it." Becky nodded as she ran up the stairs and into her room.

She closed the door and approached the closet. "Mike, is everything okay?" she asked before hearing his sobbing. She felt heartbroken hearing that, making her look sorrowful. She slowly opened the closet door and saw him on the floor and wiping his tears, his cheeks

wet from them. He looked surprised that she arrived, trying to make himself stop crying and sobbing, his lip quivering. She looked pained to see him like this. "Michael?"

"Y-yes...?" he asked, his voice shaky.

"Are you okay?" He nodded, though she was skeptical. "Are you sure?"

He nodded at her again, smiling. "I promise."

---

Later that day, school ended and the two boys began riding to Jane's home. They parked their bikes at the side of the house and rang the doorbell. They heard footsteps coming to it and the door finally opened, revealing Becky, making the two confused at first before Dustin smiled.

"Becky?!" he asked, sounding happy.

She chuckled at him and patted their heads. "It's been a long time since I've seen you boys," she greeted as she then hugged them both and let them go. They have all seen each other during her wedding the past year. Jane insisted that they'd all go, so they did. The wedding itself was boring, but the reception was fun, especially when hanging out with her when she wasn't with her husband. "You all look a little older than before."

Dustin chuckled while Lucas still looked confused. "Why are you here?" he asked her.

"Oh, I'm just staying here for a week, y'know, visiting." She paused before frowning. "I heard about your friend."

Both of them looked solemn. "Yeah..." they both muttered at the same time.

"Jane's being torn about it too. That why you're visiting her now?" Though that wasn't the case, they both nodded. She then pointed up at the stairwell. "Should be up in her room."

"Thanks," the curly-haired boy said as he and the African-American

boy entered in, hearing TV in the background, and went upstairs.

"Yeah, thanks!" Lucas added.

...

They both arrived at her room, but were shocked to still see Michael there, sitting on her bed and looking nervous at the two of them being present. They both looked at their female friend with dumbfounded looks. "Are you kidding me?" Lucas asked rhetorically.

She sighed and replied, "Listen, I discovered something about him this morning."

Lucas scoffed. "What, that he's a psycho?"

"No! It's that he knows about Will."

Both of them looked surprised, yet suspicious. "He knows about Will?" asked Dustin.

She grabbed the picture of them in the science fair and showed it to them. "He saw this and pointed at him. I could tell he knows that he's missing!"

"You could TELL?" the black-haired boy questioned.

She put the picture down on the drawer. "I mean, think about it. We found him on Mirkwood, where Will happened to disappear in."

Dustin looked pretty shocked. "That is pretty weird..."

"AND he told me that bad people were after him. Maybe these bad people took Will too." Lucas and Dustin looked at each other as if she was speaking crazy to them. She groaned at the two. "Come on, guys. There is a chance that maybe he knows where Will is."

Lucas shrugged. "Then why doesn't he tell us?" She shrugged back as well. He then approached him rather threateningly and asked aggressively, "Where's Will?" He didn't answer, feeling threatened by his demeanor. He roughly grabbed his shoulders and shook him, shouting, "Where is he?!" He now looked terrified.



"Hey! Stop! You're scaring him!" shouted Jane.

"He should be scared!" he retorted.

"Kids? Is everything alright?" asked Becky from downstairs.

The kids looked stressed, especially the tomboy. She answered, "Y-yeah! We're...playing a game up here, it's just getting intense!"

"That quickly? Okay..."

The kids sighed as Lucas suggested, "Since your aunt is here, we're going to take him to her."

Jane instantly shook her head. "No! Michael said that telling any adult will put us all in danger."

Now both the boys looked puzzled and a bit scared. "His name's Michael?" the African-American boy asked.

"Is his last name Myers?" asked a scared Dustin.

"No," she replied. "His last name's Eleven."

The boys looked even more confused. "Eleven?"

"Like the number?"

She groaned again. "It doesn't matter! All that matters is that telling anybody about him will put us in danger."

"Wh-what kind of danger?"

"This sort of danger." She then formed a finger gun and pointed at the two of them. Dustin's scared expression amplified, but Lucas still thought it was bullshit, slapping her finger gun away.

"No way, no, no, no! We're going to go tell your aunt, right now!" Lucas then stormed to the door and opened it. However, as it began to open, it suddenly shut on him, making the table shake with the character pieces. All of them shot back in shock that it even happened. He tried again and the door slammed shut again, now

locking itself up.

All of them were aghast as they turned to see Mike with his head tilted down, but his eyes on the door. His nose was bleeding. He said sharply, "No." All of them had the same thought at the same time, Who the hell was this kid?

"Kids?" called out Becky.

"G-getting intense, Auntie!"

"Well, make less noise, okay? It's scaring me." She nodded, still shocked to see what he had done.

---

In the police station, Chief Hopper had a man named Earl inside to question him about how Benny was before his "suicide". So far, he didn't know and the police felt like they were wasting their time, especially the chief himself.

"When was the last time you saw him?" Hopper asked the old man.

"Yesterday at lunch, as always," he answered.

"Just you and the rest of the boys."

"Yep." He sighed, smoke coming out due to him smoking. "Just me, him, Henry, and..." He then paused a few second before stating, "Well, while we were talkin', Benny spotted this boy eating his fries in the kitchen." He shook his head. "But no kid'd do this."

Hopper looked a bit shocked to hear him mention a kid in the first place, his eyebrows raising up. "A boy?"

He nodded. "Yup. Eatin' and stealin' his fries like a rat. Ain't that crazy?" He chuckled a little. Hopper looked at one of his lieutenants, both looking shocked to hear about this. He gestured him to go get something, so he stood up from his chair and did.

"This boy...what did he look like?"

Earl put his hand up to a certain height. "I think he was about yee

tall. 'Bout average for a boy like 'im." He then shook his head. "That's all I can say though. He was back in the kitchen, so I wouldn't know what he exactly looked like."

The lieutenant then gave him the missing poster of Will. "Did he look like this?" he asked the old man.

He shook his head at it. "Ah, no. That's Lonnie's missing kid." He looked up at the chief. "His hair was buzzed, near to the scalp."

Hopper heavily sighed and put two fingers on the bridges of his nose. "Let's just forget about the haircut, alright?" He then stood up and pointed at the poster. "If he had a buzzcut, could it be Lonnie's kid?"

Earl shook his head once again. "Like I said, didn't get a good look at 'im." He then shrugged. "Dunno." He looked at him. "Could've." Hopper nodded, realizing how deep this search was getting. Will with a buzzcut...how could that happen?

---

**Stopping here. What do you think? How was the Terry-centric scene and Becky? Any typos or mistakes?**

**Keep supporting this fanfic with reviews, follows, and favorites! I'll see you in the next chapter!**

**\*EDITS of 06/20/18:**

- Removed "she stated" and "she answered."
- Made Carl a man around Becky's age
- Changed "a few days" to "a week" because it's true
- Had Becky remember who Will was without Terry telling her, adding Joyce into the topic as well
- Had Terry acknowledge Joyce's feelings about Will missing
- Replaced "repeated" with "said softly"
- Fixed a typo
- Added "gesturing her to leave with his head."
- \*frequent change\* Changed the way Becky speaks a little because after a few rewatches, I realized that she doesn't really talk like that a lot
- Removed "she asked"

- Replaced "sighed" with "placed a hand on her shoulder.", "he muttered" with "he asked", and "she said" with "she answered"
- Replaced "mortified" with "terrified" 'cause those two are not synonyms, as I've learned
- Removed "back to her" in "he retorted" and "the curly-haired boy asked."
- Added "slapping her finger gun away." to "but Lucas still thought it was bullshit"
- Added "He chuckled a little."
- Removed "the chief asked."
- Replaced "Bit tall for an average boy." with "'Bout average for a boy like 'im."
- Removed "He looked a bit taller.", "Well, maybe it was just 'im just runnin'." and "shrugged again and"

## 5. Hey, What's Wrong?

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

"I'd feel...weird if I went there by myself," Kali said on the phone. She was in her room in the evening, still wearing the same outfit as she did in school and laying on her bed. As Barb talked, she replied, "It's not rocket science, Barbara. You can just tell your parents that you'll be staying at my place afterwards, alright?" She paused to hear her reply. "Just tell them we're studying. They'll believe you."

"Kali, it's time for dinner!" called out Terry, making her groan a little impatiently and cover the bottom receiver of the phone.

"Alright, Mum! I'm coming!" she called back before speaking to Barbara again. "I need to go. I'll see you in an hour, alright?" Barb said her confirmation and hung up the phone, getting off of her bed and going downstairs.

...

Soon, Terry, Jane, Kali, Becky, Carl, and the boys ate their steak and mashed potatoes together. Becky, being the chatty woman she was, whispered to her husband, "Forgot to tell ya, Carl. The boys are Jane's friends. They went to the wedding last year."

He nodded, though he looked weirded out. "A girl with boys as her friends?" he whispered back at her.

Becky sighed. "It's not like that, alright?"

"Is something wrong, Auntie?" the tomboy asked, both of them giving her their attention and shaking their heads.

"No, sweetie."

"No, not at all," her husband added. Silence roamed around the table again.

Jane wasn't the only one not eating her meal, but also Dustin and

Lucas. Terry noticed this and frowned. "Is there something wrong with the meal, kids?" she asked them.

They all looked at her and shook their heads. "Nah, I just ate...two baloney sandwiches for lunch," the curly-haired boy replied.

"Y-yeah, so did I," Lucas added.

"Me too," Jane also added.

Terry looked puzzled at them. "Why?" They all shrugged, making her sigh a little and continue to eat her steak. Jane sighed and took her glass of milk.

"So, Mum, there's this assembly for Will tonight at school," Kali said to her adoptive mother. "Barb's driving me here."

Terry raised an eyebrow. "And I'm hearing about this now because...?"

She shrugged. "I thought you knew about it."

She shook her head. "I told you and Jane, no going out after dark until Will is found." Jane quietly muttered something under her breath as she drank her milk. Becky quietly mouthed her name, making her pout a little.

"I know that, but it would be weird if I didn't go there. Everyone is going." She made a convincing face to persuade her.

Terry sighed once again and replied, "Come home by ten and no more than that, alright? Aunt Becky will check to see if you come back on time, right?" She turned to her sister as she nodded before Terry pointed at the kids. "Take the kids with you then."

They all then suddenly objected with different "nos" since they have something else planned for the night. Everybody looked puzzled at their reactions, Kali feeling a bit relieved but still confused. "Why not?" Becky asked.

"Isn't he your friend or something?" added Carl. Jane sighed and began drinking her milk again. She then saw Michael walk down the

stairs, making her spit her drink. The boys saw him as well, their eyes widening. Why was he out of the room NOW?! The rest of the family looked puzzled at their reactions again and were about to look where they were looking. However, Dustin pounded his hands on the table a couple of times, getting their attention back to him before they even noticed the freckled boy.

He nervously grinned and said, "Sorry...spasm." Jane wiped her mouth with her sleeve while the boys looked at her with looks of shock and irritation, making her scowl at them. She saw Mike then walk down to the basement, her sighing in relief. Had he been caught...man, they didn't even want to think about that. All in all, he wasn't caught and that was good.

Terry, Becky, and Carl looked at the kids curiously. The two women thought that they were acting weird today, especially Jane.

---

After dinner, Terry left for her night shift, Kali left to go to the "assembly", and Becky and Carl went out to ride around town again, this time at night. That left the kids alone, Jane getting leftovers for him in a large tray.

In the basement, Mike sat under his little fort again and turned the knob of the walkie-talkie. It turned on, hearing the static coming from it. He pushed a button on it to the left before hearing the kids walk down the basement, looking up at them.

Jane approached him with the tray and set it before him. "Here's dinner," she said to him. "There are no adults around, so don't worry." He nodded before looking at Dustin and Lucas. He looked a bit nervous when staring at them, making them feel the same as well. Jane gave him a reassuring smile and continued, "Don't worry. These two promised not to tell anybody." She then turned to them. "Right?"

They both nodded at her and looked at him. "Yeah, I mean, we wouldn't have upset you if we knew you had superpowers," Dustin replied jokingly. The tomboy pouted at him and hit him in the shoulder, making him flinch. "Ow!"

She turned back to Mike and crouched down to him. "What Dustin's

trying to say is that...they were just scared earlier. That's all."

Lucas nodded in confirmation. "Yeah, we just wanted to find our friend," he said.

Mike looked at him with a puzzled look once again. "Friend?" he asked.

He nodded, looking wary. "Uh, yeah. Friend? Will?"

"What is a...friend?"

He looked at his friends in disbelief. "Is he serious?" He sighed before answering, "A friend is-"

"Somebody you trust a lot and will do anything for," Jane answered instead.

"Ya lend them your stuff, like comic books and trading cards," Dustin added.

"And they never break a promise."

"Especially when there's spit," Lucas added.

"Spit?" Mike questioned.

He nodded and spat onto his hand. "A spit swear means you never break your word." He then shook the curly-haired boy's hand with his spitted hand before letting go. Dustin actually looked a bit disgusted by that and rubbed the spit off on his jeans.

"That is super important because friends...friends always tell each other things, things their parents wouldn't know," Jane added as a finish. "So...yeah." He began to think about that. It was weird, but the thought of them being friends? People who tell each other things adults wouldn't know? It didn't sound that bad...

---

Barb was driving Kali to Steve's when her friend suddenly said, "Wait, pull over."



She looked at her with a confused look. "What? Why?" she asked.

"Pull over, Barbara." She sighed and stopped the car on the side of the road.

The red-haired female looked at Kali and asked again, "Why?"

She looked at her as if she was surprised that she didn't know. "We can't park in the driveway. What if his parents come back?" She then got out some lip gloss and looked at the mirror to see herself put it on.

Barbara scoffed. "Are you serious, Kal? I'm just gonna drop you off." Her hand then went to the keys to start it up again.

"No!" Kali exclaimed as she grabbed her hand to stop it. "Calm down, you promised you would go with me." She then closed the lip gloss and put it away. "We might actually have a good time."

Barb's lips moved to the side in disbelief. "I don't know...I think he just wants you to get in his pants."

She scoffed at her rather coldly. "No he doesn't."

Now she looked dumbfounded. "Are you serious, Kal? He invited you to his house, with no parents..." Kali looked at her discerningly, which was unusual for her. Her eyes widened. "Kal, you're not this stupid!"

The Indian girl clicked her tongue and unbuckled herself. "Tommy H. and Carol are going to be there, so-"

"They've been having sex since the 7th grade, so it'll be a big orgy."

The black-haired girl looked at her with a disgusted look. "Ugh, that's disgusting!"

Barb chuckled a little before saying, "I'm serious though."

Kali then proceeded to take off her shirt to wear another. "Then you could be...my guardian or something, making sure I don't get drunk or do something stupid."

Barb sighed and saw that her shirt was off, revealing her lace bra. She raised an eyebrow at her. "Is that a new bra?"

She looked at her with a surprised look and lied, "No, no, of course not." Of course it was new. It was bought especially for him...

---

The two girls arrived at the house, hearing the music blasting on inside. Kali, now wearing a black, long-sleeved, low-cut top under a black coat, rang the doorbell. She looked back to see her friend looking nervous, not only about the party, but about her. She placed a hand on her shoulder and said, "Barbara, calm down."

She nodded, still skittish. "I-I'm calm," she replied, though the Indian girl didn't believe it.

Steve then opened the door, the music now sounding clearer, and grinned at the girls. "Hello, ladies," he greeted in a rather friendly manner.

---

Back in the basement, Jane, Lucas, and Dustin were discussing about Michael, the telekinetic boy wandering to the table and sitting down on one of the chairs, staring at the Dungeons & Dragons board. The trio took notice of him doing that and slowly approached him. "What's the weirdo doing?" Lucas asked quietly to his friends. He set his fingers on the table and closed his eyes. They were all thinking about what he might be doing.

"Mike?" Jane asked.

He then opened his eyes and took a character piece that was a wizard...it was Will's piece. He looked at it closely and said, "Will."

Dustin's eyes widened. "Superpowers..." he murmured. Lucas rolled his eyes at him for saying that.

The curly-haired girl sat beside the freckled boy and asked sincerely, "Did you see Will? On Mirkwood? Do you know where he might be?" He looked at her before sliding the rest of the pieces off of the board and flipping it upside down. He then set Will's piece on it. All of the

others looked very confused. "What does that mean?"

"Hiding," he replied to her.

Her eyes widened a little. "Hiding? From who? The bad men?" He shook his head. He then grabbed another piece and set it right next to the wizard...it was the Demogorgon piece. Jane looked very worried, looking at the boys for an answer. They were looking at her for an answer as well. However, it was clear what Mike was trying to convey...

Will was in grave danger.

---

Near Steve's pool, Tommy carried Carol over the water, making her shriek and scream bloody murder before setting her down on the ground. "Tommy, you're such an asshole!" she yelled at him playfully as he laughed and she shoved him away.

Steve snickered at the scene as he grabbed a can of beer from a bucket of ice and pulled out a knife. He then poked a hole at the bottom of the can and drank it swiftly, dropping the knife. While Barb rolled her eyes at the sight, Kali looked a little dumbfounded that he was even doing that. He finished the can and set it on a small glass table next to his seat, grabbing a cigarette and his lighter from his pocket and starting to light it up. Kali muttered, "Oh my God..."

Her boyfriend looked at her and asked, "What was that, Kali?"

She looked at him with a smirk. "Was that supposed to impress me?"

He looked a bit confused. "You're not?"

She chuckled. "You're an idiot, a stupid cliché."

"Nah, you're a cliché." His cigarette finally lit up and he ashed the end, taking it out and blowing some smoke. "With your grades and band practice and-"

She raised an eyebrow at him. "I am NOT in band!"

He shrugged at her and got out another can of beer, handing it to

her. "Then I'd like to see you try this." She looked at it, and then him as if he was weird. He grinned and blew out smoke again. "What, you admit to being a cliché?" She scoffed at him and took it away from him, standing up and grabbing the knife he dropped. "You make the hole at the bottom and-"

"I know, smartass," she replied as she began to poke the hole in the can.

"Yeah, man!" Tommy shouted at him, his arm around Carol. "She's smart, you dumbass!" He then crushed an empty can on his head and dropped it, shouting, "Whooo!"

The red-haired female with glasses looked in utter dismay as her friend finally poked a hole in the can and began drinking it. Steve, Tommy, and Carol then chanted multiple times, "Chug!" After half a minute, she finished the can and dropped it, making the three cheer and Barb roll her eyes again. She kind of felt proud of doing that, showing that she wasn't all that of a goody-two-shoes.

She then turned to her best friend and demanded nicely, "Come on, Barbara. Now you do it."

She arched her brows up at her. "What?" she asked.

Kali got another can from the bucket and gave it to her. "I did it, so now you have to do it."

The short-haired redhead shook her head. "No thanks, Kal."

She grinned at her. "Come oooon, it's fun-"

"Kali," she said in a sharp voice, making her stop for a few seconds. She was feeling pretty annoyed by her attitude, but shrugged that off and gave her a reassuring grin.

"Give this a chance, will you?"

Feeling defeated, Barb sighed and stood up from her chair, taking the can and knife with her. She started poking the hole. "So, you just..." she muttered, trying her best to poke the hole. All of a sudden, the tip slipped and cut her hand, making her drop it and the can at the same

time and gasp. She instinctively covered her bleeding hand with her other hand.

"Gnarly!" Tommy said, chuckling with his "girlfriend" at the fact that she did that.

Kali gasped, now worried about her. "Barbara, are you alright?"

"I'm fine," she answered.

"You're bleedin-"

"I'm fine," she repeated coldly, making her stiffen a little. She wonder what was her problem. Barb looked at Steve and asked, "Where's the bathroom?"

He pointed at the house. "Ah, down in the kitchen to your left," he answered, getting up from his chair. She nodded as she went inside. The Indian girl sighed and crossed her arms, thinking about Barbara's behavior tonight and her cut. She hoped she was fine, despite being a bit more bitchy than usual...

When Carol turned her back on the freckled guy, he shoved her into the pool, her screaming and landing in with a splash. Kali looked at the sight and completely forgot about her friend's well-being at the moment, giggling a little. "What the HELL, Tommy?!" she shouted at him before he leaped in with her, causing a bigger splash. The black-haired girl began laughing, thinking they were silly.

Then suddenly, Steve shoved her into the pool before jumping in himself. Soon, the teens began playing with each other in the water, the guys throwing the girls into the water again. Tommy and Carol made out a couple of times during the playtime while Kali chased Steve for her shoe she lost when she was shoved into the pool. At that moment, she had completely forgotten about the fact that her best friend was even hurt...or there to begin with.

---

Late in the night, Terry exited a door in an alleyway outside of Hawkins and put the money she had in her hand inside the pocket of her coat. She hated doing this job, but it paid well, more than what

the pub pays her. Not only that, but at least one of the men there was decent. She still had to work there because she needed that extra money.

She went inside her car and started the engine before hearing, "*Terry*." She gasped and looked around in a panicked way before sighing in relief and placing a hand on her forehead. She was thinking of him, again. She didn't think of him that much so often, so why now? Damn him. She switched gears and began driving back to Hawkins.

Her radio played a news report, talking about Will Byers, again. She heavily sighed. Just hearing about him being missing, it reminded her of what she wanted to forget. She didn't want to see what she had already witnessed, so she turned off the radio and continued driving.

---

During their drive around town and having the car hood and the windows up, Carl said, "I told you that it wasn't good for you to go."

Becky scoffed, rolling her eyes at him. "What? I can't visit family now?" she asked bitingly.

"This town is awful, Becky. I made you move with me for a reason." The woman sighed and looked out the window, seeing lit-up signs in downtown Hawkins. "Becky, I'm just doing what's right for you."

"What's right for me?" She looked at him and pointed at herself, looking baffled that he even said that.

He looked at her briefly with a stern look before looking back on the road. "This town never sat right with me, never in school and definitely NOT now-especially when there's a missing kid."

Becky scoffed again, looking away from him and looking out the window again. "Yeah, this town is shitty, but it's MY home. My sister and her children live here and I want to go see them! What the hell is wrong with that?!" She slammed her fist on the dashboard in anger and annoyance, making him tense up a little but try and keep calm. "If you don't like this goddamn town, then why the hell did you even bother coming with me?"

He let out a deep sigh before answering, "I just couldn't stay back in Indianapolis with you gone to...here!"

"Oh, what am I to you?! A 5-year-old?! I'm a grown woman, I can take care of my own goddamn self!"

The two then began to argue about visiting Hawkins before Carl spotted something on the road, making him brake to a stop and halting their argument. The thing disappeared quickly. The two sighed in relief that they didn't hit an animal or anything. Carl began to drive again, huffing in frustration as well as his wife. They stayed silent for the rest of the drive.

---

Soon, the teens got out of the pool and were inside. Steve gave them all towels, including himself, and they began drying themselves off. "I'm SOOOOO freezing!" Carol said, shivering.

Tommy smirked and stated, "I heard there's a fireplace in Steve's mom's room." She smiled at him as they both went upstairs to "warm up".

The brown-haired guy looked at them in objection. "You kidding me? Just so you know, you're cleaning the sheets!" he shouted before approaching his girlfriend. "You alright, Kal?" She nodded, shivering a little and wrapping herself in her towel like a cape. He smiled at her. "C'mon, let's get you some dry clothes." He then walked upstairs to his bedroom, Kali following.

However, she stopped when she heard Barb call out, "Kali!" She looked down to see Barb with her hand all bandaged. She looked at her worryingly. "Where are you going?"

"To Steve's room," she answered bluntly. "To change." She unwrapped herself to show her wet clothes. "I fell in the pool, unfortunately." She giggled, but Barb didn't giggle back. She instead looked at her in pure disbelief, her giggling ceasing.

"Kal..." She shook her head. "This isn't you."

She looked confused at her. "What are you talking about?"

The red-haired female huffed. "I can't believe it. You're NEVER this stupid!"

She looked irritated at her and stated, "Barbara, if you're going through your period-"

"I'm not! I'm stating the truth!"

"I'm just going upstairs to change!"

"Oh, and what? You're going to do the walk of shame back to school?"

Now Kali looked angry, stepping down and biting said to her, "You know what? If you're not enjoying this, then go home. I don't need your negative attitude, anyway!" Barb looked absolutely crestfallen of what she said.

"Kal-"

"Go!" She then stormed up the stairs to go to Steve's room. Barbara sighed and looked like she was about to break. They had never gotten into an argument like that before. Oh, why does it matter? She was pulling her down, anyways. She sniffed and walked back outside, taking off her shoes, sitting on the diving board of the pool, and looking down.

...

Inside his room, the Indian girl rubbed her hands together to make herself warm and looked out the window. She deeply sighed. She felt bad for yelling at Barb like that, but she was enjoying her time here and Barb...she was killing it for her. She didn't like that.

Suddenly, she felt a pat on her back and turned to see Steve with a plain navy-blue sweatshirt and grey sweatpants. She took them from him and said, "Thanks. If you could give me a bit of privacy?"

His face lit up in realization, making him reply, "Oh, yeah, yeah. Sorry." He then turned his back to her and walked away from her. She took off her coat and thought of something. She did buy that lace bra, just for him. Why not...show it to him?



She grinned and murmured in a seductive voice, "Steve..." He turned to her as he saw her move her fingers, a gesture for him to come towards her. He did as she went up on her toes, wrapped her arms around his neck and began kissing him. He kissed her back, his hands now on her waist.

They continued kissing until Kali slowly eased him onto the bed, her being on top of him now. She kept her grin as she grabbed the ends of her shirt and pulled them up. Once the shirt was off, she threw it on the floor. He looked mesmerized by seeing her in a bra like that. "Damn..." he whispered, making her giggle before connecting her lips to his again. The kissing became passionate very quick, both holding the backs of each other's heads to keep them from breaking the kiss.

They switched positions, now being Steve's turn to take his shirt off. She smiled at the sight of his chest as they continued to make out more. She pulled his body down to hers as her hands roamed around his back, their bodies grinding against each other. The two felt more aroused and passionate and-

Kali heard a sudden echo of what sounded like her name, making her break the kiss with Steve and look outside. He looked confused. "Hey, what's wrong?" he asked her, touching her cheek.

She figured it was part of her imagination, so she looked up at him and answered, "Nothing." Both of them smiled and continued to passionately kiss each other. They continued on and had sex with each other that very night.

The night that Barbara Holland disappeared.

---

**Done! What do you think? Any typos or mistakes? How was the two original scenes?**

**I was thinking for the ending scenes in this chapter, since Kali IS a different character than Nancy, I figure I make her react to things differently than Nancy did originally (f.e.: arguing with Barb instead of just telling her to go home).**

**Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter!**

**;D**

**\*EDITS of 06/20/19:**

- Removed "She nodded as" and "she replied"**
- Changed the water to milk 'cause it's funnier**
- Replaced "coming" with "going"**
- Replaced "into" with "in"**
- Added "in a rather friendly manner." to "he greeted"**
- \*frequent change\* Changed Kali's British language to American English because she's lived in the U.S. for most of her life**
- Added "Not only that, but at least one of the men there was decent." to allude to a certain character from Suspicious Minds...**
- Changed Terry's thought into a description**
- Changed "shitty" to "awful"**
- Added "she went up on her toes"**

## 6. Coca-Cola

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

An hour after they had sex, Kali was dressed in the clothes Steve offered her and sat next to her boyfriend on the bed, looking at him. She just couldn't believe it. She actually had sex, with Steve Harrington. She thought it was great, that it was worth it, smiling a little. "Hey, Steve?" she asked, nudging her sleeping boyfriend a little. She got a little grunt in response. "I'll see you tomorrow, okay?"

"Mmm-hmm..." he replied. She thought he looked cute while he was sleeping. She then got up from the bed, grabbed her coat and wet clothes, and walked out. She hid the wet clothes inside the coat, buttoning up the coat and leaving the home. She did stop at the sound of a twig snapping, but after a few seconds, saw nor heard nothing else, so she finally left Steve's home and decided to walk all the way home.

---

Terry was back home, but after Becky and Carl got in as well. The mother was cooking a casserole in the kitchen, but they weren't far from her, being able to talk to her. "Are you sure you two haven't seen her?" a worried Terry asked.

"We came in, we called her name, we looked for her around here..." Becky answered before shaking her head. "Nothin'." Terry let out a deep sigh before her sister grabbed her arm gently again. "Hey, let's hope for the best for now, okay?" She nodded, but she could feel her worry skyrocketing.

Suddenly, the three adults heard the door open, Terry standing up and seeing Kali entering in. She gasped, left her casserole, walked towards her, and instantly hugged her, startling her a bit. "M-Mum?" she said in a surprised tone.

She released her hug from her and looked both worried and angry. "Where have you been, Kali?" she asked before tilting her head towards Becky and Carl. "Your aunt and uncle didn't see you at ten!"

Kali quickly thought up of a lie. "I mean, after the assembly, some people wanted me to go out for a bite."

"And you didn't think to call us here to let us know?" Becky asked in a concerned tone.

"Yeah, young lady," added Carl. "We started to worry about you, especially with the things going on around here."

The teenage girl looked worried and faced her mother. "Mum, I'm sorry. I didn't realize how late it was." She began walking upstairs. However, her adoptive mother spotted something and grabbed her arm to stop her. "What?" she asked in an annoyed tone.

"Why are you wearing sweatpants?" Terry asked, pointing at her sweatpants.

"Oh, erm...I spilled my drink and Steve offered me one of his sweatpants from his bag so that I can change in them in the bathroom."

Terry looked less worried and more stern, realizing what her daughter has been up to. "It was Steve's? Is Jane right about him being your boyfriend?"

Kali looked appalled at her. "What?! No! We're JUST friends!"

Becky shushed her, making her feel more annoyed, and pointed upstairs. "Jane and the boys're sleeping, so keep your voice down," she whispered to her.

She rolled her eyes at her and was about to go upstairs until Terry said in a slightly louder voice, "Don't give your aunt those eyes"

"Good night, Mum."

"Kali!" The Indian girl stopped and turned to her, looking very mad, making her adoptive mother look sad and worried again. "It doesn't have to be in front of them, but you can talk to me. Whatever happened, you can talk to me about it." She then placed a hand on her heart. "I'm your mother."

Kali let out another heavy sigh. She just wasn't in the mood, not right now. "Nothing happened, Mum. Good night." She finally went upstairs and into her room. Terry sighed and turned to Becky and Carl, her eyes welling up with tears and her mouth turning into a frown. Becky instantly stood up from the couch and gave her sister a big hug.

"Aw, Terry, don't worry," she whispered to her ear soothingly. "She'll come to realization soon, okay?" She nodded yet again, though she partially didn't believe it. From that sight, Carl frowned, feeling bad for his sister-in-law. Terry then remembered something of her past again...

---

*In an orphanage, Terry and her ex-husband were looking around a hallway, looking into rooms and seeing what child they should adopt. At the time, Terry was a couple weeks pregnant with Jane. However, the two had to adopt a child because her ex-husband insisted her.*

*They looked into another room, seeing a group of children playing with different toddler toys. The room was light-blue and had unicorns, a happy sun, and a large rainbow over it. The dirty-blonde-haired woman then spotted a little girl, possibly around the age of 3, with sun-kissed skin and black hair in a braid, a navy-blue dress, a white collared shirt under it, white socks, and black Mary-Jane's. She was playing with a bunch of colored blocks, sitting against the wall.*

*The woman smiled, tugging her ex-husband's shoulder and pointing at her. "How about her?" she asked him.*

*He looked at the young girl closely, narrowing his eyes and grinning. "I think she's perfect," he answered her. She hugged him in joy. She thought that girl was pretty and also lonely, since she was playing by herself. She thought that a girl like her deserved a family.*

...

*Later, they went through the process of adopting the little girl, whose name was Kali Prasad, and she finally arrived at the house. Terry looked very happy, carrying her and hugging her. "I will take care of you until the end of my days, Kali," she whispered to her.*

*"Okay, Mum," the young girl replied, making her smile wider. Terry never broke her promise to her.*

*Even when she divorced her husband because of...that.*

---

In the basement the next morning, Mike messed around with the walkie-talkie again, Jane and the boys down there with him and talking among themselves. Jane now wore a orange plaid long-sleeved shirt, baggy jeans, and tennis shoes. Lucas had on a blue and white plaid shirt with a white undershirt underneath, dark-blue jeans, and Nikes sneakers. Dustin wore a white shirt with a gray picture on it, a gray long-sleeved shirt underneath, long khakis, and white sneakers. "Alright, we'll just tell our parents and I tell my auntie and uncle that we have AV Club after school," the curly-haired tomboy said to Lucas and Dustin. "That should give us a few hours for Operation: Mirkwood."

Lucas still looked skeptical. "Are you sure Mike really knows where Will is?" he asked her.

She sighed. "Just trust me, Lucas." He nodded before she asked, "Do you have the supplies?"

He nodded again as he got out some supplies from his bag. "Sooooo, I got binoculars from 'Nam," he stated as he set a pair of binoculars on the table. "Army knife from 'Nam..." He then set a sheathed knife onto the table. "Hammer...camouflage bandanna..." He set those on the table as well. "And the wrist rocket!" He then proudly showed off a yellow and black slingshot.

Both Jane and Dustin raised an eyebrow. "You're gonna take out the Demogorgon with a slingshot?" he asked.

Lucas scoffed at him. "First of all, it's no ordinary slingshot, it's a wrist rocket. Second of all, the Demogorgon's not real. It's a made-up monster. But, if there IS something out there..." He then positioned the wrist rocket to a shooting position. "I'll aim at its eye and THWACK!" He let the shot go, startling both of his friends. "I'll blind it."

Jane nodded at him and looked at her curly-haired friend. "And you, Dustin?"

"Alright!" He then poured out an assortment of food on the table, getting weird looks from both of his friends. "I got Nutty Bars, Bazooka, Smarties..." As he listed the food off, Jane and Lucas exchanged glances, thinking that Dustin packing so much snacks was so ridiculous. "...and trail mix." He smiled at the both of them, the two giving him weird looks.

"Are you serious?" the African-American boy asked.

His smile disappeared. "We need energy to go on with our travels and increase our stamina."

Jane nodded at him. "I think a few snacks are good enough."

Dustin shot her a glance before looking back at Lucas. "Also, why do we need weapons anyway? We have him!" He then pointed at Mike, who looked up at his pointing finger.

"He only shut one door!" Lucas replied.

"With his mind! Isn't that crazy and cool?!" He began to smile again. "Imagine all the other insane stuff he can do, like..." He then ran to grab Jane's Star Wars starship. "He can probably make this fly!"

Jane looked at him in objection. "Dustin..."

"Hey, Mikey." The freckled boy looked up at him. "Concentrate and make this fly!" He then dropped it, hoping to see Mike make it float. He didn't, so it dropped to the ground. Dustin didn't lose hope though. "Okay, one more time." He then picked it back up and said, "Make this fly, okay?" He then dropped it. Mike didn't do it again and let it drop to the ground. Both Jane and Lucas sighed as the tomboy picked up her starship.

"Dustin, he's not a dog," she said to him sternly.

"Kids! It's time to go to school!" Terry shouted from upstairs. Dustin and Lucas got their things and left in a hurry, but Jane decided to stay behind for a little bit and crouch down next to Mike.

"Stay down here, okay?" she asked of him. "Please do not make any noise or leave. My auntie and uncle will be here, so they'll catch you if you come up there, alright?" He nodded in understanding, making her smile a little. "If you get hungry, then you can eat Dustin's snacks."

"Jane!" Terry yelled out. "Let's go!"

She groaned a little, turned her face to the voice, and yelled back, "I'm coming, Mama!" She then turned back to Mike and said in her usual quiet voice, "You know where the power lines are?"

He looked puzzled. "Power lines?" he asked.

She nodded. "Yeah, those lines behind my house? Do you know where they are?" He nodded back. "Meet us there after school."

"After school?"

"Three-fifteen." He still looked puzzled, so Jane quickly thought up of an idea. She took off her watch and strapped it onto Michael's wrist. "When this says 'three-one-five', then meet us there."

He looked down at the watch, murmuring, "Three...one...five?"

"Yup. See ya." She then got her backpack and coat and hurried upstairs to leave. He watched her go, murmuring again, "Three-one-five." He then looked at his watch, waiting for those numbers to come.

---

Kali arrived in Hawkins High School that very morning, wearing a gray long-sleeved shirt, a black skirt that reached to her knees, white socks, and black Mary-Janes. Some of her hair was pulled to a tiny ponytail at the back of her head, like Becky's. She looked around nervously. Some students did look at her for just a second, making her feel anxious. She never felt this anxious about anything before...not since she approached Terry and her ex-husband for the first time. But this was different.

She approached her locker and opened it, but not before Steve opened it farther and slammed it onto another locker, making her jolt



a little and look at him. She giggled a bit nervously when she saw him. She saw that he wore a plain collared white shirt, a navy-blue collared jacket, grey pants, and black shoes. "Hey, Kal," he greeted her.

"Hey...Steve," she greeted back before looking as nervous as she did before.

The jock noticed that expression and asked, "Everything alright?"

She lost that face and answered, "Oh, yes, yes, definitely." She then got out the supplies she needed for her class out of her locker. "It's just that...I feel like everyone is staring at me."

"Oh, I didn't tell them."

She chuckled a little. "I know you didn't, but still..." She sighed anxiously and looked at him in the eye. "If Tommy or Carol told anybody..."

He gave her a reassuring smile and placed his hand on her shoulder. "You're being paranoid."

She looked more anxious and muttered, "Sorry..."

"Nah, Kal, it's cute." She smiled warmly at that. Cheesy, but sweet, yet again. She didn't mind that too much though. "Really though, I had a good time."

Her smile widened, replying, "Me too." They then shared a loving kiss for a few seconds. When it broke off, the couple laughed together, feeling happy. Steve then pointed at the rainbow butterfly stickers and left. She giggled, thinking he was an idiot, but a lovable one. She then closed her locker and walked to her classroom.

...

When she arrived and sat at her desk, she looked to her right and saw an empty seat. It was Barbara's seat. She began to worry a little, wondering where she might have gone to. She couldn't be skipping, she was never one to skip a class...

---

Later in the day, Mike did eat all of Dustin's snacks, though some were left unfinished. Out of boredom, he decided to make Jane's starship actually fly back and forth, using his powers by looking at it and moving his eyes back and forth. It was easy for him to do, not needing to strain his brain to make it happen.

Suddenly, he heard Becky and Carl's voices from upstairs, making him tense up and drop the starship. He then stood up, waiting to run and hide in case they came down there. For a minute, it didn't happen, making him sigh in relief. He wanted to go up and do things around the house, but those two adults were up there. He began thinking about what he should do. He didn't feel like staying down there anymore. He was more safe there, but...

Maybe he can just sneak around?

He shook his head. He tried with Benny with the fries, but he still caught him. But that was just one time, right? Maybe the second try wouldn't be the same? He nodded, thinking that he should give it a chance. He took a deep breath and walked up the stairs on the ground floor of the home as quietly as he could.

He could hear Becky and Carl in the living room as well as the TV being on. He slowly crept to an edge of the wall that separated the hallway he was in and peeked to see the two of them sitting down and watching television, Becky sitting on one chair and Carl sitting on the La-Z-Boy. He made sure that he wasn't visible enough to see the two of them.

"So your sister's been divorced?" Carl asked his wife.

She nodded in response. "Two years after Jane was born," she answered, smoking a cigarette and having an ashtray next to her.

"Do you know why?" Mike thought of a way to sneak past them, so he walked to the other side of the wall.

She shrugged. "She only told me he did something extremely shitty, but she never elaborated for me."

"Do you think you know why?"

She shrugged again. "Maybe he cheated on her. Guy always gave me the wrong vibe, never knew what Terry saw in 'im." Mike then quietly sneaked past the living room, hoping the two adults wouldn't see him.

Carl raised an eyebrow. "The wrong vibe?"

She looked at him. "Like...he looked kind, he acted kind. But there was something off about his kindness, almost as if he was faking it." She tapped the ashes into her ashtray. "Like some of those people back in the city."

Carl sighed. "Rebecca, I'm not going to deny that there are fakers in Indianapolis."

She nodded. "But...?"

He stood up from the La-Z-Boy, approaching his wife. "It IS better than this town. It's more secure, there are good jobs, more happy people-"

"Addin' to the fakeness..." she retorted, making him look annoyed at her for a second.

He lowered himself to her eye-level, having a sincere face. "Becky, you'll see...and you'll adjust to it."

She huffed, feeling defeated and taking another drag of her cigarette. "I guess I will." He smiled at her, holding her hand.

Mike quietly ascended up the stairs while they were talking, but then heard a commercial come on. Curious, he took a peek at it. A playful jingle was playing and a woman began singing happily. He narrowed his eyes and saw a large can of Coca-Cola in the commercial. Instantly, his mouth hanged open and he looked...scared, breathing a bit unevenly. He then went upstairs and into Jane's room, closing the door.

As it closed, he huffed and sank to his knees, his hands still on the knob and his eyes closed as that image reminded him of another event of his past...

---

*He was in an isolated room, alone and having a set of wires as a headgear on his head. He was sitting at a metal table and in front of him was an empty can of Coke. He could see, behind the only window in the room, the scientists working on some machines. Dr. Brenner and his father were in his sight, in front of him and looking down at a board with an analysis of the boy and what test he will do. Dr. Brenner, who was holding the board, handed it to another scientist. Both him and Dr. Wheeler looked at the freckled boy. He kept a neutral face, trying to keep calm as he looked at Dr. Brenner first. The white-haired man nodded at him. He then turned to his father, who nodded at him as well.*

*He took a deep breath and then stared intently at the can. He began to strain, trying to make it crush. The instrument that measured his brain waves scribbled back and forth quickly on some paper, showing smaller waves more frequently. He narrowed his eyes and strained himself even more until the can finally crushed. He relaxed himself, feeling a bit hazy as his nose bled a little. He looked at the two men.*

*Both doctors smiled at him and talked to each other before looking at the boy again. He wiped his nose and saw fresh blood on it. He looked shocked before looking up at them, their smiles widening. He looked terrified. Their smiles were always unsettling to him, not only because of the way they looked, but also because of what they implied. They implied that there will be more experiments like this...*

---

He suddenly heard footsteps ascend the stairs, stopping his flashback and making him stand up in a state of panic, looking for a place to hide. He didn't want to hide in the closet again, so that was out of the question. He saw Jane's bed and saw the gap between it and the ground. He thought that he could hide under there, so he ran and slide himself under it. He heard the door open and saw two pairs of feet walk into Jane's room. He gulped and stayed still, trying to be as quiet as possible.

Becky and Carl looked all over the room, seeing what the noise of footsteps and a closed door was about, looking concerned and cautious. "Maybe it was the wind?" Carl suggested before the two of them looked at the window. It was closed.

She shook her head. "No, couldn't be that," she answered as they

wandered around the room again. "Hello?"

"Who's here?" the man asked in a demanding voice. "Show yourself."

Michael was shaking in fear, hoping they wouldn't see him.

As Becky opened the closet to see if anybody was there, her husband began approaching the bed, amplifying the boy's fear and anxiety. He quickly thought of doing something to make him not look under the bed, so he stared at his feet. He began straining himself for a bit, then tilted his head up for a second. That made Carl slip and land his face on the bed, biting his tongue and yelling in pain.

The woman gasped and ran to him. "Carl?!" she exclaimed. "Wh-what happened to you?!" He tried to talk, but it was slurred, the man holding out his tongue and choking on his spit. Becky was instantly worried for him and made him stand up. "Hold on, honey. Let's go downstairs and put some ice on that, 'kay?" He made a noise that was an affirmative. The two then left the room and went downstairs, making Mike feel relieved and come out from under the bed.

He closed the door quietly this time and sat on Jane's bed. That was a close one and it was worth using his power. He wiped the small drop of blood from his nose and laid onto the bed, looking at his watch again. He read quietly, "One-two-seven..."

---

In the place where the mysterious hole was at, Dr. Wheeler and Dr. Brenner witnessed a rope machine being drilled down across from it. Out of nowhere, Dr. Brenner said to his fellow doctor, "That boy is stubborn."

The man with the glasses looked at him and replied, "Michael?"

He nodded. "M11 was always stubborn. This is no different."

The dark-haired man sighed and crossed his arms. "He may be stubborn and a bit clever, but he is not that smart. I know we will find him." He and Brenner heard more growling come from the hole. "I just hope it's soon."

Brenner gave him a reassuring smile and placed a hand on his

shoulder. "Don't you worry, my old friend. We will." They both exchanged grins and looked back at the hole, feeling more confident about finding Michael now.

---

An hour later in the home, Mike began fiddling with the character pieces Jane had. He then grabbed the Yoda one, fiddling with it a little and inspecting it closely. He wondered what Yoda was, since he wasn't a human. He remembered Jane telling him that he had a power to move things with his mind. It was like...he was him. He sure didn't look green or had long, pointy ears. But him sharing the same power...it kind of intrigued him and made him think, were there others that had powers like him? He never saw or remembered anyone else from that...place.

He suddenly heard a door close downstairs, making him look puzzled. Several seconds later, he then heard a car starting outside. He immediately ran to the window and looked out of it to see Carl and Becky driving away. Seeing them leave left a smile on his face. He was finally safe, being the only one in the house now.

He instantly exited his room and ran down the stairs. He got to the La-Z-Boy and sat on it. He pulled the handle on it, making it recline him back. He laughed a little at how fun that was to do. He looked over to see a phone on a small table next to him and decided to pick it up. He heard the dial tone, mimicking it a few seconds after. He thought that maybe he should ask Jane about it when he meets her again.

He set the phone back and pulled the handle to un-recline his chair. He then walked towards the TV and crouched down to it. He pressed a button and it turned on, showing an ad for hair spray and making him jolt back a little. He saw it for a few seconds before pressing another button. The channel changed to Ronald Reagan giving out a speech about what was going on in Syria. He pressed another button and it showed He-Man, shouting an iconic line. He looked a bit intrigued by that, but then pressed another button to show a shopping channel. His intrigue disappeared when he saw that. He pressed one last button, showing a channel that played gospel music. He finally pressed the off button, turning the TV off.

He felt like exploring more of the upstairs, so he went up there and opened a door to a room he never discovered. It was Kali's, being girly, purple, and white. He entered into it and looked around. There were posters, lamps, pillows, pictures, even books and a small TV.

He then spotted a box. It was cream-yellow and had green vines on it. On the middle of the top was a rounded picture of a meadow with a pretty girl and a kitten in her basket. This box sparked his curiosity, so he opened it, hearing a lullaby. He instantly closed it, his breath hitched at the moment. The sound of the lullaby nearly scared him. He decided to open the box to see what was in it. He saw a small ballerina figure twirl around and a mirror behind her. He didn't care to look more into the box because the lullaby that was playing made him feel...anxious, scared even.

After one part of it ended, he closed it, trying to calm down. He then looked back and saw a billboard with an assortment of photos with Kali in them pinned onto it. He walked closer and inspected the photos. They ranged from her being three to being sixteen, her current age. The photos with Barbara caught his eye the most, she and Kali smiling in the photo with them wearing sunglasses and others where they made silly faces. He smiled at them. He noticed that Kali was smiling for the majority of the photos, even from when she was young.

He wished he smiled just as much as a younger child.

He wished he could be outside more when he was younger.

His smile disappeared at those thoughts. He let out a heavy sigh and exited her room, feeling a bit pained.

---

**Done! What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes?**

**Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter!**

**\*EDIT of 06/26/19:**

**-Removed "she stated." and "she replied to her."**

- Replaced second "pretty" with "also"
- Removed "she stated."
- Replaced "chuckled" with "laughed", "holding" with "having", and "scoffed" with "raised an eyebrow."
- Removed "are people that" and "sighed again and"
- Replaced "ashamed" with "annoyed" and "swig" with "drag"
- Added "for a second." in "making him look annoyed at her" and "He lowered himself to her eye-level, having a sincere face."
- Fixed a couple typos
- Removed ", and having bits of black."
- Had Mike scared of the lullaby because of how it sounds rather than knowing what it was



## 7. I Made You A Casserole

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

During lunch, Kali went to Steve's table, having Tommy and Carol there too. As she sat down next to her boyfriend, she saw that Carol had her foot on the table, showing a scratch she had. "It was a heated pool, Carol," Tommy said to her. "No way you could've had frostbite."

"Then what is it?" she asked him.

"Who cares?" Steve answered. "Get your foot off the table, it's disgusting!" Pouting, Carol did so. Tommy did joking ease his spoon to her scratch, making her slap it away and muttering, "Ew!"

Kali was still worrying about her friend, so she asked the freckled guy, "Tommy, when you and Carol left, did you see Barbara?"

He gave her a confused look. "Who?"

"Barbara, the girl with the short red hair and freckles? I don't see her today."

"I seriously have no idea who you're talking about." He and Carol then snickered, making the Indian girl gave them an annoyed glare.

Steve looked at them disapprovingly and said, "Don't be an ass, man. Did you see her when you left last night or not?"

Tommy shook his head. "Nah, she was gone when we left."

"Probably couldn't stand to hear any of that moaning," Carol added teasingly before mocking Kali's voice and moaning, "Oh, Steeeve~!" She repeated that and her "boyfriend" decided to join her, practically insulting her voice and pounding the table. The dark-haired girl never felt so annoyed and so mad in her life.

She quickly got up and grabbed her tray, about to leave the table. However, the brown-haired guy said to his friends sternly, "Hey, stop." The two stopped, laughing with each other afterwards as he

got up and grabbed her arm. She stopped and turned to him. "She's probably skipping or something, alright?"

Kali sighed. She knew Barbara was never the one to skip...but maybe...there was a possibility she was. She did argue with her last night...yelled at her. Maybe she couldn't stand to see Kali at school and skipped the day. She nodded, replying with, "Yeah, that's probably it." Now she felt terrible because of it. She thought she never would have done that to her best friend...

She looked around in the cafeteria and saw Jonathan Byers walk outside it. He stopped and looked at her. She looked back at him, keeping their stare at each other before he left. She wondered what was that all about?

---

On the middle school campus, Jane and the boys began looking for rocks for Lucas's wrist rocket. Jane gave Dustin a big rock and asked, "How about this?"

He shook his head at her. "Too big for the sling," he answered as he dropped and she continued looking for another one. "Do you guys think maybe Mike was born with his powers, like the X-Men? Or do you think he got them from something, like Green Lantern?"

Lucas scoffed at him, looking at a jagged rock before dropping it. "He's not a superhero, he's a weirdo," he replied to him.

The curly-haired tomboy gave him a look of objection. "So? The X-Men are also weirdos," she rebutted. Both Dustin and Lucas looked at each other, grinning and chuckling with each other and making her look a bit confused. "What?"

They both looked at her, their grins disappearing for a bit. "Alright, what happened when you made him stay the night we found him?" Dustin asked her.

"Um, nothing?" She shrugged.

"He didn't try to sleep with you, right?" Lucas asked.

She looked baffled that he even asked that. "What?! No!" Both the

boys looked skeptical at her, making her pout at them and cross her arms. "I'm serious. He didn't try any of that with me!"

They nodded at her, their grins coming back. "Okay, because I mean..." The curly-haired boy shrugged. "Well, you seem to like him very much."

"Well, yeah-"

"Like, VERY much," the African-American boy added, the girl arching her brows up.

She immediately shook her head, blushing a little. "N-no, it's not like that-"

"Why else would you keep some other boy with you?" Jane looked at Dustin with confusion.

"Because he was lost in the woods?"

"Was that an answer or a question?" She then looked at Lucas disapprovingly. "Seriously, you look at him all like..." He then did his best impression of her. "O-oh hey, Mike! Mike! Mike! Mike!" He then hugged her. "Oh, Mike! I-I love you SO much!"

She then shoved him away from her, making her blush in embarrassment. "Lucas, stop!" she said to him.

"Yeah, Lucas, stooooop!" shouted Troy's voice as he and James approached them. The fun and embarrassment in the air disappeared when they walked towards them, the boys losing their smiles and Jane losing her blush.

"What're you losers doing back here? Looking for your missing friend?" James asked as he and his friend laughed.

"That's not funny," Dustin replied at them angrily. "He's in danger, serious danger."

"Yeah, hate to break it to you, Toothless, but he's not in danger," Troy replied to him. "He's dead. That's what my dad says. Probably killed by the queer he was probably sleeping with." He and his friend

laughed at his joke again. Dustin and Lucas's eyes widened while Jane looked at them in pure irritation.

"You're not funny," she said to Troy. He and James stopped laughing as he approached her menacingly. She looked up at him, trying her best to hold back from punching him.

"Too bad for you, Tranny. I never wanted to impress you anyway, since you're pretending to be something you're not."

"She never even looked like a girl," James added, the two laughing once again. The tomboy gripped tightly on her sleeves, almost about ready to hurt them both.

"Unless you're the one sleeping with that queer, huh?" He then pushed her, chuckling.

"Hey, that's not funny!" Dustin shouted at him.

"Probably confusing your vagina for a pe-" She couldn't hold back, so she forcefully shoved him back, making him stop and look at her with an angered face.

"Come on, guys," she said in an annoyed tone as she tried to walk past the brunette. However, he then tripped her, making her fall and scrape the bottom of her chin. She screamed a little and held her chin, trying to hold back tears that were coming to her eyes.

"Jane!" her friends shouted out as they both came to help her out.

"Watch where you're going, you dumb tranny." Troy then high-fived James and walked away from them.

The tomboy stood up with the support of Dustin and Lucas, now having a small scrape at the bottom of her chin. She winced when she touched it, sighing and looking at the boys going away. "Are you alright?" asked Lucas.

She nodded. "Yeah," she replied, though she didn't feel like it.

Dustin decided to cheer her up a little by giving her a rock for the wrist rocket. "How about this one?" he asked her.

She looked and fiddled with it a little, nodding and smiling. "Yeah, this is it." He smiled at her, the girl giving it to the black-haired boy.

"The monster killer, right here," he added as the kids began laughing, almost forgetting that the bullies approached them in the first place.

---

Leaving work early at three o'clock, Terry got out of the pub with her purse and walked to the nearest telephone booth, getting some quarters and rolling to the numbers of her home, hoping that Becky would pick up. She kept hearing the dialing tone, looking around while she was waiting. She then spotted a man with a hairstyle similar to...his. She caught her breath as she blinked a few times. Thankfully, it wasn't him, just another man. She sighed in relief. God, why was she thinking of him so often at this time? She never did before...

The phone then picked up and Becky greeted, *"Hello?"*

Terry smiled and greeted back, "Hey, Becky."

*"Oh hi, Terry. Carl and I just came back from lunch. You still at work?"*

"Actually, I'm leaving early."

*"Oh really?"*

She nodded. "Yeah. I want to pay an old friend a visit. You know her."

There was a small pause before her sister responded, *"Joyce?"*

"Yep. I want to see how she's doing. After all, we haven't seen each other for a long time."

*"I haven't seen her since the wedding. Can Carl and I come with you?"*

She smiled. "Actually, I was going to ask just that."

Becky chuckled. *"Alright, I'll go talk to him then. See ya-"*

"Wait." She paused for a few seconds. "The casserole I made last

night, I put it in the fridge. It's for her. Can you get it out and bring it with you?"

*"Oh, sure. You betcha."*

"Thanks, Becky. Bye."

*"Byeeee~."* She then hung up and walked to her car. She and Joyce Byers were friends since high school, but now they rarely see each other often. They do call each other sometimes. Joyce was there for her as well as Becky when she was going through her divorce and she did the same for her when she got her divorce. Why not be there for her now like she did before?

---

Later in the Byers home, Joyce set up all of the Christmas lights she got and bought at work. She looked around, seeing all the lights glow. Since she knew that her son was communicating to her through lights, this was the only way for her to know if Will was back.

She then heard a sudden knocking at the door, making her jolt a little and run to the door. She hoped it was the police and that her son was finally found. It wasn't and instead was Terry, Becky, and Carl. Becky was the one holding the covered casserole. She looked surprised at the sight of them. "Hey, Joyce," Terry greeted her.

She anxiously smiled at her and greeted back, "H-hey, Terry." She then hugged her. "It's been a while since we've seen each other."

"Isn't that right?"

The brown-haired woman then saw Becky and Carl, smiling at them too. "Hey, you two. Man, I haven't seen you both since last year."

Becky chuckled and gave her a quick hug. "Glad to see ya, Joyce." The woman then shook Carl's hand.

"Carl," he introduced himself, her nodding.

"Joyce."

They all looked into her home and saw the Christmas lights in them

all of them looking puzzled. Terry decided to look back at her and said, "I made you a casserole." Becky then held up the tray.

Joyce smiled at that and asked, "W-would you guys like to come inside?" They all nodded and entered in. They all noticed that she looked and acted a bit frantic. They didn't blame her though. Her youngest son was missing, after all.

---

In the town's library, Hopper and Officer Powell were looking through newspapers in large microscopes. All the newspapers were on the topic of Hawkins Labs since Hopper was suspicious if they were the culprits behind Will's disappearance. He read one newspaper that talked about Hawkins Labs blocking inquiry. He then read another about it have alleged abusive experiments. He went on to read about a project named "MKUltra" being exposed, showing a picture of young adults and the two doctors themselves, Dr. Brenner and Dr. Wheeler. They both looked younger.

He suddenly saw a young woman in a lab coat that was standing next to the participants, being in the left end of the picture. The police chief narrowed his eyes and closely inspected her. To him, she looked like...

Terry Ives.

He let out a deep sigh, covering his mouth with his hand. Seeing Terry in that picture...god, this hole was just getting deeper and deeper.

He then read another article about Dr. Martin Brenner and Dr. Ted Wheeler being sued by a woman named Karen Bertuzzi. This woman was the ex-wife of Dr. Wheeler and a former participant in MKUltra, suing him and Dr. Brenner for stealing her child when he was born, then her oldest, who was four. He flipped to another article explaining that in detail, showing a young woman with curly, fluffed-out hair, Karen Bertuzzi.

Hopper rubbed his temples and began to think that this investigation was getting deeper than all of those he dealt with back in the city, way deeper...

---

The four adults waited for the casserole to warm up at the dinner table, the oven timer ticking and almost done. "I, uh, put these up because..." Joyce began to explain. "Will always loved Christmas. I thought that if I just put all these up..." She paused to point at the lights. "He'd...feel like he's at home, somehow." She heavily sighed, shrugging. "S-sorry if I sound crazy, but-"

"No, no, you're not," Terry reassured her, holding her hand and gently squeezing it. "I understand."

"How's one of your other boys holdin' up?" Becky asked the brown-haired woman.

She looked at her. "Jonathan?" She nodded as she deeply sighed. "I mean, he's pretty good at takin' care of himself. He always has been, you know?" Carl looked concerned, his wife lightly hitting him at the arm and looking at him in disapproval. "I mean, he thinks I'm goin' crazy, but..." She then stopped when she saw one of the lights flicker, making the others look at her direction too.

"What is it?" Carl asked.

She shook her head. "It's nothing. We just have...electrical problems." They all nodded at her, Terry keeping her hand held to hers.

"Joyce, listen to me," she said to her in a calm and nice voice. "I just want you to know that you are my friend. If you need anything at all, I'm here."

She gave her a warm smile and replied, "Thank you, Terry."

"We're also here for you too," Becky added, Joyce removing her hand from Terry's and looking at her. "Carl and I are staying with Terry for a week, so if ya need anything, we can help you too." Out of the corner of her eye, Terry looked and saw some of the lights flickering down the hallway. She raised her brow in confusion.

Carl nodded. "Yeah, I can't imagine how you must be feeling right now," he added. "I can help you too." Terry slowly began to stand up, slowly walking towards the flickering hallway.



Joyce nodded at the two of them. "Thank you both." They all then suddenly noticed Terry slowly walking to the hallway, making them all concerned. "Terry?"

She tensed up a little and turned to them. "S-sorry, I just need to use the bathroom," she said to them.

Joyce nodded again and pointed at a door. "Right there." She nodded at her and walked to the door.

The oven timer dinged and Becky stood up and faced it. "I'll get it," she said as she approached the oven and opened it with a mitt she found on the counter.

"Be careful, honey," her husband said.

While their attention was to her sister, Terry looked up and saw the light flickering down the hallway again. Now she wondered if that was just the electricity problem. She saw more lights flickering in Will's room, so she quietly entered in there. There were a bunch of different lamps circled around his bed, all flickering one-by-one. She looked absolutely puzzled, muttering, "What the hell...?" This was no normal electricity problem. Something was happening in the house. But what was it?

...

"You've seen Jane, right?" Joyce asked Becky and Carl, both of them nodding their heads at her as Becky put down the tray onto the table. "How...do you guys know how she's handling this?"

Becky sighed. "Don't tell Terry, but when Carl and I arrived, we saw her at home during school. She looked pretty torn about your boy being missing, which was why she was skippin' school."

Joyce frowned. "Aw, really?" They both nodded, making her sigh. "I mean, she and Will, they were pretty good friends." She chuckled a bit sadly. "I remember him coming home and telling me he made a new friend named Jane. He was so happy that day."

Becky patted her shoulder. "Hey, now. I'm sure Jane was happy that day too." Joyce smiled at her, feeling a bit better than she did before.

The short-haired woman then thought of something and said to Joyce, "Alright, Joyce, listen to me..."

...

The lights flickered faster and faster by the minute and then suddenly all stopped at once. She shot back a little at that. She then heard some low growling, making her tense up and slowly turn to where the growling came from. She saw the wall, more growling coming from it. Now she was getting more puzzled and concerned about this situation. She slowly approached it and looked at it closely. She saw nothing in it, but she still heard the growling. She could feel it rumbling underneath her skin and in her heart, making her breath heavy and goosebumps rise onto her skin.

"What the hell..." she muttered again, this time in horror. She then saw an inhumanly-shaped hand pop out and stretching out the wallpaper, making her gasp and step back. Her eyes widened as an inhuman figure began stretching out the wallpaper as well, trying to break through. What the hell was that?!

"Terry?!" Joyce exclaimed, making the woman quickly snap around to see her, Becky, and Carl with worried looks. "Why're you in here?"

She looked back at the wall and saw nothing, confusing her even more. When she looked back, she tried to cover up what she was doing, so she lied, "N-nothing. I just...saw that your electricity was buggy, even in here." She faked a chuckle. "You really do got a problem with electricity, Joyce. Better fix that."

Joyce did notice that she was staring at the wall before calling her name, thinking that what she said was bullshit. As she left the room, she asked her, "Did you see something?"

She turned to her and shook her head. "No, I, uh, didn't."

She frowned and furrowed her brows down at her, knowing that she lied. "Terry."

She sighed and mouthed quietly to her, "I'll tell you later." She looked a bit surprised and nodded.

"You sure ya haven't seen anything, sis?" Becky asked her sister.

She looked at her and shook her head. "Nothing, trust me." She nodded, though she and her husband were a bit skeptical.

Joyce then faced everyone. "Terry, Becky, Carl, thank you all for the casserole, but I need you all to leave now."

Carl raised a brow at her. "What? Why?" he asked.

"Now!" She then ushered them out of her home and closed the door. All of them looked puzzled at what she just did, Carl sighing deeply.

"She's really paranoid," he stated.

"One of her boys is missing, of course she is," Becky replied before her face lit up. "Shit, I forgot." She then turned to her sister. "Terry, I've been needin' to tell ya something."

She looked a bit curious. "What is it?" she asked.

Becky sighed, looking at Carl and the two of them nodding before facing her. "We heard an intruder in the house, before Becky and I left for lunch," Carl said.

Her eyes widened at that piece of news. "What?"

"We both heard footsteps, then the door to Jane's room closing. We both went up there and saw no one. Carl tripped and bit his tongue, so we had to go downstairs and put an ice on that. After we came back from lunch, we looked all over the house for them again."

"Still nobody," Carl added. "Becky told Joyce that there was the possibility of her son being there."

Terry gasped, looking appalled. Will was there?! "What if it was someone else?"

"It could be, but it's a big possibility. Why would he be in the house in the first place?"

"After all, he is Jane's friend," Becky finished. Terry took a deep

breath. They both had a point. What if Will was there? She thought that when they all come home, they'll do another investigation of the home, seeing any evidence of him being there.

---

After school, Kali began calling the Holland household in a nearby telephone pole outside of the school. She moved around a little, feeling more nervous about her best friend. "Come on..." she muttered impatiently.

The line then picked up and a woman's voice greeted, *"Hello?"*

She sighed in relief and replied, "Hi, Mrs. Holland. It's Kali."

*"Oh hey, Kali. How are you?"*

"Good." She paused for a couple of seconds. "Say, have you seen Barb there?"

*"Um...no. She actually hasn't come home yet."*

That made her worry increase. "But she did come home last night, right?"

*"No, she told me she was staying with you."*

Kali scoffed, feeling like an idiot. "You're right, I'm sorry. I meant by...did you see her come home this morning? I think she left her textbooks back at my house, so I was just wondering."

*"No. No, I haven't seen her at all."*

Now her worry skyrocketed. Where the hell was she? She didn't want to worry her mother too much, so she lied, "You know what? I think I saw her down at the library."

*"Okay. And Kali?"* She listened in, hearing a pause. *"Can you have her call me as soon as you find her?"*

She nodded. "Of course, Mrs. Holland. Sorry to bother you." She then hung up the phone and exhaled deeply. If Barb wasn't at home or in school, then where the hell could she be? She sighed, feeling stressed

about her absence and began walking to where Steve and his friends might be, holding her purse tightly.

...

As she began approaching the car, she saw Steve and his friends there as well as a girl named Nicole and...Jonathan. Puzzled, she approached the clique, who were holding the auburn-haired guy's photographs, and asked, "What's going on?"

Everyone looked at her, Tommy grinning. "Eeey, the starlet of the show comes up," he said.

She kept her confused expression. "What? What are you talking about?"

Carol glared daggers at Jonathan. "This creep was spying on us last night," she answered before handing her one photo. "He was probably going to save this one for later." She cautiously took it and looked at it. It was a picture of her through the window...taking of her shirt and revealing her bra to Steve. Her eyes widened in utter shock and horror as she looked at him. He looked away from her, looking ashamed.

"You see, he knew that what he did last night was wrong, but..." Steve said coldly as he approached him. "That's just the thing with perverts, it's hardwired into them." He then shoved him a little. "They just can't help themselves." He then started tearing the photo he had up into small pieces, throwing them into his face. "For that, we'll need to take away his toy."

Jonathan looked scared, saying, "No, please, not the camera!"

Though she didn't like what he did, Kali didn't appreciate what she thought Steve was going to do. "Steve, wait," she demanded him.

Tommy pushed him away, Steve saying, "No, no, Tommy. Wait." He stopped, laughing a little as Steve approached Jonathan with his camera. "Here you go." He reached to get it, but the jock dropped it to the ground, breaking it. The freckled guy began laughing louder as well as Carol while Nicole just smirked. The auburn-haired guy

looked shocked and terrible about what just happened.

"Come on, the game's about to start," Steve said as he began to leave.

"Boo," Tommy spat to Jonathan as he left as well.

"Bye," said Carol as she ripped more photos and threw them at him. Soon, all of them left.

All except for Kali.

She saw Jonathan kneel down and pick up his broken camera before getting the rest of the ripped pieces of his photos. She didn't like that he took her picture like that, but what Steve, Tommy, and Carol did was also despicable. She saw something one of the pieces, so she knelt down with him and picked it up. It had Barbara sitting on the diving board of the pool, looking at it in misery. She frowned at the picture, the terrible feeling of how she treated her last night coming back.

"Kal! Come on!" Steve shouted to her from afar. She quickly gathered the rest of the pieces of the photo and stood up, walking to him as he placed an arm around her shoulder. She swiftly put the pieces in her bag to save for later.

---

**Stopping here. What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes? Sorry for the lack of more kiddos. I just came up with Karen's maiden name from the top of my head, so yeah.**

**Also, before I do, this marks the end of my daily updates since I have school 'til I get winter break. Sorry!**

**Anyways, keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter!**

**\*EDIT of 06/28/19:**

**-Removed "mimicking" and added "practically" in front of "insulting"**

**-Removed "REALLY like him" and capitalized "very"**

**-Replaced "perplexion" with "confusion"**

- Capitalized "so"
- Replaced "some other" with "the"
- Added "now" in "but now they rarely see each other often."
- Replaced "people" with "adults"
- Added "young" in "He suddenly saw a young woman"
- Added ",then her oldest, who was 4." and "fluffed-out" in "with curly, fluffed-out hair"
- Removed ". That was" and connected Karen's name with the sentence.
- Replaced "she" with "Joyce"
- Added "the flickering hallway." because that sentence was incomplete before. Oops...
- Removed "and uneven"
- Added "been" in "Terry, I've been needin' to tell ya something."
- Added "Carl said."
- Replaced "tried taking deep breaths" with "took a deep breath." and "said" with "stated"

## 8. That Can't Be Will

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

Outside near the power lines, Michael paced back and forth, looking down at the watch and muttering, "Three-one-five." He repeated that to himself, seeing that it was close to it. Just a little longer...

He stopped when he heard a cat meow. He looked down and saw a stray cat behind the fence. His eyes widened at the mere sight of it, the animal meowing and hissing. Seeing and hearing that thing made him remember something again...

---

*In the isolated room again, Mike wore the headgear and saw a different cat in a cage, hissing at him. He strained himself and looked worried, since it was living and using his powers on it? He couldn't even think of what could happen to it.*

*As the small, frequent scribbles were recorded on the paper, Dr. Brenner and Dr. Wheeler watched him from another room. The boy began to shake a little and look sad. He didn't want to use his powers on it. He didn't want to kill it like that. It was a living animal. The scribbles became more smaller, the doctors looking at each other with concerned looks.*

*He looked at them a little with worry and sadness as they looked back. They kept stern faces to him, wanting him to kill it. He looked back at the cat and tried to kill it. He kept shaking more, the cat hissing at him more. Every second he looked at it, the less he tried to use his power to kill it. He never wanted to...*

*He won't.*

*"No," he muttered under his breath as he took off the headgear, the scribbles disappearing and a thin line being drawn on the paper. He stood up from his table and shouted to the two doctors, "No!" He looked really angry.*

*Dr. Wheeler sighed and talked to his comrade. Dr. Brenner replied*



something to him, making him nod back. The two looked at him, being disappointed. He felt like his heart trembled at those looks. He knew what those looks meant...

...

"NO!" he yelled as two men carried him up from his feet as he struggled to break free from them. "DOCTOR! DAD! PLEASE!" The two men exited the room and kept their disappointed looks directed towards him. He began crying and looked at his father. "DAD! HELP ME!" He shook his head at him, making him feel more torn. "DAD!"

He continued shrieking and struggling until he was thrown into the room again. At this moment, he didn't want to be trapped in there. He wanted to get out. He wanted to make those men pay. He quickly scrambled to his feet and tilted his head down as one of the men was nearly closing the door. It suddenly shot back open, one of the men being shot back from it and crashing against a wall with a lot of force. He landed on the ground, dead, as the other man pointed a gun at him. His nose already bleeding, but he stared at him and tilted his head to the right. It snapped his neck, killing him and having him fall to the ground.

The freckled boy felt a bit of pain and a lot of exhaustion in his head afterwards, panting and leaning against a wall, sinking onto the ground. Not only was nose bleeding more, but his ears also dripped blood. Veins could be seen on his face. That was the most he had used his power.

Both doctors approached the scene and looked around. They saw that the boy killed both men in only a few seconds. They both looked at each other in awe before approaching M11, him looking up at them and crawling back to a corner. They still approached them, creepy grins on their faces. He felt so terrified of what might happen.

They both crouched down to him, Dr. Wheeler placing a hand on his head gently, making his eyes widen more. "You've got an incredible boy, Ted," Dr. Brenner stated.

"I do, indeed," he replied as he placed a hand on Michael's cheek. His son began to cry and sob.

"If only my daughters were born or even capable of the same talent..."

*Ted turned to him. "Martin, they were wasted potential. I'm glad you and Teresa broke it off all those years ago."*

*He nodded. "You're right." He then placed a hand on Michael's head as well. "I don't need any of them. I got Michael Eleven, M11."*

*"We both do." The boy continued crying before he began to pass out, feeling a pair of arms carry him out of the room and into his actual room, the room that wasn't that dark...or cold.*

---

Tears began welling up from the flashback. He tried to hold them back, wiping his eyes with his hands.

"Mike!" called out Jane, startling him and making him turn to see her, Lucas, and Dustin with their bikes. She saw the look on his face and felt a bit concerned. "Are you okay?" He nodded, though he didn't feel okay. She patted the extra seat she had on her bike. "Hop on. We only have a few hours." He nodded once again as he walked and sat on the extra seat, holding onto Jane's shoulders as she and the boys took off, ready to find Will, once and for all.

---

Back in the high school, Kali, Steve, Carol, and Tommy were hanging out together near some lockers. Tommy sat on a seat with Carol's head on top of his lap. "So you know what I told Mr. Mundy?" she asked them all. "The solution of ten plus y equals blow me."

Tommy chuckled. "Horseshit, you did that, you'd be in detention by now," he said to her.

"Saturday."

He chuckled again and stated, "Maybe Mr. Mundy's still a virgin."

"Maybe he IS still a virgin."

Kali sighed in annoyance and looked around in worry, thinking about Barbara and what just happened with Jonathan. Steve squeezed her leg gently to comfort her, but it was to no avail. "Maybe you should blow him and raise your grades up a bit, Carol." She punched him in the chest, him chuckling once more.

Kali decided she had enough and began leaving, concerning her boyfriend. "Whoa, wait, Kal," he called out to her. "Where are you going?"

She stopped and turned to him, plastering on a fake smile. "You know what? I actually have to help out my mum with something. I told her." She then turned and walked away.

He looked completely puzzled, standing up and saying, "But the game's about to start!"

"Sorry, Steve!" She finally left and got out of the school, feeling a plethora of things: stressed, frustrated, worried, angry...all in one day.

---

In the woods, the kids stopped biking and began walking with their bikes, following Mike. Jane was walking right next to him. He looked at her and saw the scrape she had, asking, "Why did you get hurt?"

She looked at him with a confused look. "What?" He pointed at her chin, making her come to realization. "Oh! I...I, uh...tripped during phys-ed."

He gave her a skeptical look. "Jane."

"Yeah?"

"Friends tell the truth." He was right, making her sigh.

"I got tripped by this mouth-breather, Troy," she answered truthfully.

He looked at her, perplexed. "Mouth-breather?"

She nodded. "An idiot, a dumb person." She sighed once again. "I don't why I haven't told you about him. Everyone else at school knows. I just..." She trailed off, feeling upset by just thinking of him.

"Jane?"

She turned to him. "Yes?"

He nodded at her. "I understand."

She nodded back at him a bit nervously and replied, "Oh, uh, okay. Cool."

"Cool." The two then smiled at each other. They both liked each others' smiles and each others' company. They then looked away from each other and looked on the path ahead.

Behind them, Dustin and Lucas witnessed the whole thing, the curly-haired boy smiling a little. "Look at those two, man," he whispered to his friend.

"Yeah, I know," he replied.

"Do you really think they might like each other?"

He shrugged. "I dunno. I have a bad feeling about Mike, so we need to keep an eye out for Jane."

He nodded. "Right, right."

---

Kali walked all the way to Barbara's car. She was utterly surprised that it was still there, meaning that she didn't take it. Why not? She then looked in there to see if, for some reason, she was there. She had no luck, making her feel even more terrible.

She backed away from the car and shouted, "Barbara?! Barbara!" There was no answer.

---

She then arrived at Steve's home, opening the gate and closing it to get to the pool. She looked around, seeing no signs of her friend. "Barbara?!" Still no answer.

All of a sudden, she heard some bushes rustling in the woods, startling her. Maybe it was Barb? She walked into the woods and continued shouting, "Barbara?" She suddenly stopped when she heard more rustling, whipping around to the direction it came from. She saw nothing. What the hell was making that noise? It'd better not be an ani-

When she turned back to the front direction she was going, she saw a figure dash away right before her eyes. She shot back and fell down, instantly getting up and grabbing her bag. Terrified of what it could be, she ran away from the woods and the home, not wanting to deal with whatever it was.

---

Back in her home, Terry called Joyce on her phone and began talking to her about what she saw earlier. "*Cl-clawed hands?*" she asked her.

"Yeah," the dirty-blond-haired woman answered. "It was like...it was trying to break away from the wallpaper. Then...I saw a body try to break away from the wallpaper as well."

She could hear Joyce gasp. "*A...a body?*"

"Mmm-hmm, but...it didn't look human. It was like...I dunno, but it didn't look human...more like a monster." She could then hear Joyce's worried sigh.

"*Okay, now li-*" She heard her stop as her dog barked in the background, making her feel concerned about her.

"Joyce?"

"*I'll talk to you later, Terry.*" Before she could answer, she heard the dial tone again. She sighed and put the phone down. She began worrying about Joyce. She hoped she was alright.

Now she wanted to know two things: what was that thing coming out of the wallpaper in Joyce's house and who was the intruder in her home? For the latter, it could be Will, but there was a chance that it wasn't him. She sighed again, laying on her La-Z-Boy and thinking.

A boy goes missing for a few days and some monster appears behind some wallpaper. God, what was going on in this town now? It hasn't been this crazy since...damn, how long? She knew it was a LONG time. Just...what the hell was happening? What was that thing? Why was Will missing? Who was the intruder inside of her home? Why was she thinking of "him" all the time?!

Suddenly, her eyes widened, thinking of something. Her former work

with her ex...Hawkins Lab. They performed numerous dangerous and unethical experiments there. Perhaps...perhaps he and his friend Ted...now it began to piece together for her, making her breathe unevenly.

"Oh my God..." she muttered as she un-reclined her chair, her hand on her chin. That was a huge possibility...yeah, yeah, Hawkins Lab might have something to do with all of this! They had to!

Suddenly, she, Becky, and Carl heard the door open, Kali walking inside with an upset look. Terry saw that and stood up. "Kali? What's the matter, sweetie?" Becky asked her.

"Aunt Becky..." she murmured, being near tears as she looked at Terry. "Mum...I think...something happened to Barbara. Something terrible." The women gasped as they both began to hug her. Carl decided to join in and hug her too.

"Oh, hun, I'm so sorry..." the short-haired woman stated solemnly.

"Kali..." Terry murmured to her adoptive daughter. "I'm sorry too." She began to sob into her chest.

"Just take deep breaths..." Carl suggested for the teenager.

Instantly, the mother came to a conclusion. Barbara may be like Will, her disappearance connecting to Hawkins Lab somehow...

---

"I don't get it, Chief," Officer Powell said to Hopper, both still in the library.

"What don't you get?" he asked him.

"This woman, Karen Bertuzzi, sounds like a nutty one to me. I mean, her newborn son AND young daughter were taken in for LSD mind control experiments? I mean, she's been discredited. Claims were thrown out-"

The chief groaned and slid that article away from him. "Then forget about that." He then gave him the article of "MKUltra" being exposed, tapping the two doctors. "Take a look at this." Powell looked down at

it. "Dr. Martin Brenner and Dr. Theodore Wheeler, co-operators of Hawkins Lab."

The other officer shrugged. "Okay."

Hopper scoffed and leaned back into his seat. "You don't find that interesting?"

He shook his head at him. "No, not really. So what if those two were involved in some hippie crap back in the day?"

"This isn't hippie crap, this is CIA-sanctioned research."

The African-American man shook his head again. "I don't know, man. Probably has nothing to do with our kid."

He then pointed at the adults in gowns. "Look at that, all of them, wearing hospital gowns. There was the piece of fabric the teacher saw at the pipe. That sure looked like a piece of a hospital gown to me, is it not?" The other man shrugged again, making deeply sigh again before pointing at the woman in the picture. "Then there's Terry, being wrapped up in all of this."

Powell squinted his eyes to get a better look at her. "Terry Ives? The other single mother in town?" He tried to decipher her look in the picture, then gave up and shrugged. "I don't know. Could be some other woman."

Hopper let out one more deep sigh and leaned back on his seat again. "Listen, I'm not saying that there's some grand conspiracy. All I'm saying is that something happened. Maybe Will was at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and he saw something that he shouldn't have."

Powell looked skeptical at him, deeply inhaling. "I mean, it's a reach-"

He leaned towards him. "It's a start. Now, we're going to question Terry Ives and see if she has anything to do with this." The other officer deeply sighed, thinking he was getting a little too crazy and jumping to conclusions way too fast. On the contrary, Hopper felt like he was up to something, finally getting to the answer to this problem.

*"Hey, Powell, is the chief there?"* asked one police officer through Powell's speaker.

The police chief himself took it before he did and answered into it, "I'm here. What do you got?" What he heard afterwards shocked him to no end...

---

It was now nighttime and the kids were reaching to their destination. Mike finally stopped, making Jane do so...in front of Will's house. She looked extremely confused at him. "Why are we here?" the tomboy asked.

"He's here," Mike answered. "Hiding."

She shook her head. "No, this is where he lives. He's missing from here, understand?" He looked puzzled. He knew Will was there...

The other boys stopped and looked the same as Jane did. "What the hell are we doing here?" Lucas asked.

"Mike says he's hiding here," the curly-haired girl answered.

"Uh, NO, he's not!"

Dustin sighed in irritation. "I swear if we came all the way out here for nothing..." he complained.

"And that's exactly what we did!" The black-haired boy pointed at a now worried Mike. "We trusted him and look where we are now! I told you he had no idea what the hell he was talking about!"

Jane shot him an angry glare before facing Michael, crossing her arms. "Why did you bring us here, Mike?" she asked him.

He tried to answer, but couldn't think of the words for it. "Jane, don't waste your time with him!" Lucas said in an annoyed voice.

She looked at him disapprovingly. "Then what do you wanna do?"

"Call the cops, like we should have when we found him!"



"We're not calling the cops, Lucas!" The two then got into an argument, Mike beginning to feel bad. He knew Will was there, but how could he explain it? He didn't know.

"Guys..." Dustin said as he spotted some blue and red lights from far. "Guys..." The two kids continued arguing until he yelled, "GUYS!" They stopped arguing as all of the kids saw police cars and even an ambulance. All of them looked shocked.

"Will..." Jane murmured in horror, thinking that he was probably found. They all ran to their bikes and began following the direction they were all going to as fast as they could. All of them, even Mike, were horrified of what they might see.

---

They finally arrived at the quarry, many police cars and the ambulance there. The kids parked their bikes, got off of them, and ran to the scene. They hid behind one of the vehicles and saw what was going on. They saw two men carrying a limp body from the water to a raft. The kids saw who that was...

Will.

All of them were in utter disbelief, especially Jane and Mike. "N-no..." the tomboy muttered, her voice shaky. "Th-that can't be...Will..."

They saw the men carry his body to shore, getting a better look at him. Lucas frowned and shook his head. "It is Will...it's really him..." He, along with his friends, were near to tears.

Mike never was so shocked in his life, not since he encountered...that. He could have sworn he saw him back at his home, hiding from that "Demogorgon", the others called it. He knew it, he could have sworn he knew it...

Jane looked away from the scene and leaned the car, beginning to cry and covering her face with her hands. She just couldn't believe it. Will was dead, her best friend, the first friend she ever made...dead. Mike looked sorry for her and touched her shoulder. "Jane-" he said before she swatted it away.

"Jane?!" 'Jane' what?!" she yelled at him, making him jolt. "You said he was alive, that you can help us find him alive! Why did you lie to us?! Why?!" Mike began to shake at her angry and demanding voice.

"I-I-" he stuttered. He pointed far out. "I saw him-"

"Oh, you saw him?! Well, do you see him now?!" She pointed at the body being taken into an ambulance. "He's dead! He's dead and we were supposed to find him before he dies and what do you do?! LIE TO US!" Mike felt like he was going to cry. "What is wrong with you? What the HELL is wrong with you?!" He didn't answer. She then bumped past him and grabbed her bike.

"W-wait, Jane, where are you going?" asked a crying Lucas. "Jane..."

"Jane, don't do this," Dustin said in a shaky voice before she took off. "Jane!"

"Jane!" The two boys kept yelling her name, but Jane rode on, still crying and sobbing. She was just in utter disbelief and distraught. She trusted some boy to find her friend and she ends up seeing him dead. This was the worst day she ever had to live through.

Mike placed his hands on his temples, muttering in repeat, "No..." He then got a shove from Lucas.

"You pissed off our best friend!" he shouted at him. "You pissed off the both of us too! I knew you were a goddamn liar!"

Dustin shook his head at the freckled boy. "Seriously, dude, why?" he asked him, being distraught. "Why did you lie to her, to us?"

He tried to answer, but couldn't muster up a word because of the lump that was growing in his throat. Lucas shook his head and got his bike. "Let's not waste our time with him any longer, Dustin. Let's go." He nodded as he got his bike and they both rode away without Mike.

"W-wait!" he shouted to the both of them. "No! Please!" They didn't stop and got out of his sight. He almost began to sob, his breathing heavy and uneven. He knew Will was back at his home...hiding...he just...he didn't how to explain it correctly. And that made him lose

the boys, and Jane.

He shook his head, running up to catch up to them. They were the only people he felt comfortable being with, he wasn't going to lose them. He didn't want to.

---

Back in the Ives home, everyone was in the living room with Kali, listening to what she was saying about Barbara. Suddenly, they all heard a door slam open. They all saw Jane come inside, not even bothering to close the door and sobbing into her hands. That made them all rise up from their seats and look at her. She stopped and looked back at all of them, tears streaming down her cheeks and her voice shaky. "Mama..." she whimpered, her lip quivering.

"Jane...?" Terry asked in surprise as she approached her daughter and gave her a hug. She cried and sobbed into her clothing. She began shushing her. "Just keep calm, take deep breaths..."

"He's gone..." Her eyes widened as well as all the others'. "Will is gone..." Now they all felt terrible for her, even Kali.

"Oh, sweetheart..." Becky murmured, now hugging her. They all took turns to hug her and try to comfort her. They all felt terrible to hear that Jane saw that Will was dead. Kali, her friend was missing, but she wasn't dead. Not to her knowledge...

Terry was distraught and began thinking, was Will really connected to Hawkins Labs or was he just lost and...found dead? She thought that maybe she was just reckless speculating things earlier...

---

**Done. What do you guys think? Any mistakes or typos?**

**This was a hard scene for me to watch, even though I know Will's body was a fake, so of course it would be hard for me to write. I know that Jane would be absolutely heartbroken by the sight of "Will's" body in this AU.**

**Anyways, I'm getting sick. I hope to get better soon so that I can go to school and my trade school and update this more. Just**

keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

**\*EDITS of 06/30/19:**

- Added "and hearing" in "Seeing and hearing that thing made him remember something again..."
- Replaced "twisted" with "snapped", removed "neck snapping and", and added "and having him fall"
- Added a comma in "I got tripped by this mouth-breather, Troy,"
- Replaced "weird" with "perplexed"
- Removed "began" in "laying on her La-Z-Boy and thinking."
- Replaced "minors" with "adults"
- Replaced "perplexed" with "confused"
- Removed "that" in "hiding from that "Demogorgon", "

## 9. Will is Alive, He's Out There Somewhere!

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

Mike ran through the woods for a very long time, he didn't know how many hours and he didn't care. He needed to go back to her, to Jane. He didn't want to be far away from her, or even apart from her. She was his friend, his first friend. He didn't want to lose her like that.

He stopped for a moment to take a breath, leaning against a tree. He began to think about Will. He was dead? He never thought that he would see him dead. He knew-no, he SAW him! Not in this world, but the other. He was alright, but hiding! He still had to be alive...right?

He sighed and stood up, running for another plethora of minutes.

...

He finally saw the power lines, making him smile a little and look to see Jane's house. He hoped she was there, climbing over the fence and running to it.

---

Inside the home, the family watched the news, a man explaining what had happened to Will Byers. Terry, Becky, Carl, and Kali looked sad at that news. "Should we talk to Jane now?" Becky asked Terry. It was almost two hours since she came home.

She shook her head and answered, "Give her some time, then she'll come to us when she's ready." She didn't even wanted to go to her night shift, not after seeing what she's seen and having her daughters distraught over what happened to her friends.

...

In the basement, Jane laid down on the couch and looked through some drawings Will made for her. They were D&D-themed and had knights, dragons, mages, etc. Though she felt happy, she kept a sad face, still trying to process the fact that he died.

Suddenly, she heard a knock on the door, startling her and making her drop the drawings. She stood up and slowly approached the window first, being cautious. She saw that an exhausted Mike was there, locking his eyes with hers for a few seconds before she looked away and scoffed. She should have known he would come back.

She walked away back to her couch before hearing the knock again. "Go away," she said to him loud enough to hear through the door.

...

Outside, he frowned. He had to get in there, so he tilted his head down and looked at the door.

...

When she sat on the couch, she heard the door unlock itself and open. The freckled boy entered in, making her stand up again. "I said go away!" she shouted at him.

He shook his head and wiped the small amount of blood from his nose. "No," he replied as he shut the door and went under the fort, picking up her walkie-talkie and turning it on, messing with the settings and closing his eyes.

The tomboy huffed and stormed to him. "You shouldn't be here, not after what you did to me and my friends." He didn't reply, but he frowned. "I thought we were friends, but friends tell each other the truth. They don't LIE to each other!" He still didn't respond, but kept his frown. "You made me think Will was okay, that he was still out there, ALIVE. But he wasn't, he..." She let out a heavy sigh and shouted, "He's dead!" He let out a sigh as well for a reply, making her feel more annoyed. "Maybe you thought you were helping, but you weren't. You hurt me...and my friends...do you understand? What you did SUCKS!" He kept frowning. He had to let her know and using this device will help him.

The fact that Mike was replying began to annoy Jane, so she grabbed her super-com and tried to pull it away from him. However, he managed to hold onto it tight and yanked it away from her, her feeling more mad than before. She then roughly pushed him a little,

the boy still having his eyes closed and having the walkie-talkie in his hands. "Go! I don't need you here, you-"

All of a sudden, the walkie-talkie stopped giving out static and had someone sing through it, *"So come on and let me know...should I stay or should I go?"* Jane looked very shocked and Mike opened his eyes, looking at her and having his nose bleed again. She knew that voice...

It was Will's.

As he continued singing through the walkie-talkie, the freckled boy offered it to the curly-haired girl, her instantly taking it and bringing it to her ear to make sure it was him. She turned very sentimental, knowing that it was HIS voice. So, he wasn't dead, after all?

She pressed a button on her walkie-talkie and asked, "Will? Are you there?! Do you copy?! Over!" She tried listening for an answer, but all she got was static. Mike began to worry for her. She tried again. "Will?!" No answer again, but it was undeniable. She looked at the telekinetic boy for confirmation. "Was that really...is it..."

He nodded, giving her a reassuring smile. "Will," he answered. Without a second thought, she hugged him, startling him a little. Will was alive...she didn't know what she saw back at the quarry, but that couldn't have been Will. She wouldn't hear his voice from the super-com, otherwise.

Slowly and carefully, Mike returned the hug, feeling warm and comforted, at long last.

---

In the morning, Jane was up in her room, laying in bed and wearing a gray shirt and black sweatpants. Terry, dressed in her waitress uniform, knocked on the door. "Jane?" she asked. "Can I come in?"

"S-sure..." she replied in a sad voice.

Her mother opened the door and walked to her, sitting next to her and patting her head. "Are you alright, sweetie?"

She shook her head. "I...I don't feel like I can go to school today, Mama. Will..."

Terry frowned and grabbed one of her hands, squeezing it. "Oh, it's alright, sweetie. I understand. You can skip school today." The tomboy nodded. "I'll be going to work, then check in with Barbara's parents. Your aunt and uncle will be dropping off Kali, so why don't you go with them? You can get a book and they can go to wherever you want to go, like the video store. I won't mind you checking out any movies, even R-rated ones."

Jane frowned a little. "I...uh...I just want to stay home. Is that alright?"

The woman sighed, worrying more about her. "Are you going to be okay staying here by yourself?"

She nodded again. "I will, Mama."

She nodded. "Okay, sweetheart. If you do need anything, you can call me at work or you can talk to your aunt or uncle when they come back, alright?" The girl nodded again, Terry smiling and kissing her forehead. She got up and began leaving the room.

"Bye, Mama."

"Bye, sweetie." Terry then closed the door, hoping that thing she saw yesterday wouldn't come out for her daughter. She would be absolutely terrified, like Joyce was about Will.

Meanwhile, Jane removed the sheets she had on herself and got out her walkie-talkie, raising the antennae and pressing the communication button. "Lucas, do you copy?" she asked into it, listening for an answer. For several seconds, there was nothing. "Lucas, come on. I know you're there. This is serious!" She listened for an answer, but there was still nothing. She sighed and stood up. "I'm not stopping until you answer. Lucas...Lucas." She then repeated his name several times, "Lucas, Lucas, Lucas, Lucas, Lucas, Lu-"

*"I'm not in the mood, Jane!"* he finally answered. *"Just leave me alone. Over and out."*

She shook her head. "No, not out! This is urgent! It's about Will! Over."



*"What about him? You mean his funeral, over?"*

She shook her head again. "No, screw his funeral!"

*"What?!"*

She sighed again. "Listen, I need you to come here stat. And bring Dustin with you. Over and out." She then brought down the antennae and walked to her basement. While she was doing that, she hoped that her friends would believe her. Mike would do that again, right? Try to communicate with Will? This could get her and the boys closer to finding Will.

---

In Hawkins High School, Kali met up with Steve just outside of the gym. The girl wore a white long-sleeved shirt with purple stripes on it, dark purple skinny jeans, and casual sneakers. "So, wait a second," her boyfriend said. "You came back to my house?"

"I was looking for Barbara," she answered.

He shrugged. "That's alright and all, but why didn't you just talk to me?"

She shrugged, shaking her head. "I-I don't know."

"Like, you seriously saw some guy with a mask hanging out in my backyard?"

She shook her head again. "I don't think I saw a mask on him."

He scoffed. "So, what then? He had no face?" She shrugged again, making him sigh.

"I just have a horrible feeling about this situation," she replied to him.

He looked a bit distressed and leaned against the wall. "This is really bad..." he muttered under his breath.

Kali looked a bit puzzled. "What is?"

He looked at her. "The cops, they'll want to talk to all of us now. I

mean, me, you, Tommy, Carol-"

She raised a brow and crossed her arms. "So?"

"My parents will murder me!"

The dark-haired girl looked absolutely baffled at what he was saying. "You're kidding me." He gave her a puzzled look. "My best friend is missing and you're worried about your PARENTS?"

Steve deeply sighed and put his hand on her shoulder. "Kal, just...whatever they ask you, don't mention the beers. All of us will get in trouble and Barbara's got nothing to do with it."

She was absolutely appalled by this, scoffing at him and slapping his hand from her shoulder. "This is unbelievable," she muttered under her breath before turning her back to him and walking away from him, looking very upset.

A very confused Steve stopped leaning on the wall and shouted, "Wait, Kal! Where are you going?!" She didn't answer because she didn't want to. "Kali!" She didn't stop when he shouted her name. She just couldn't believe him. Her best friend, her very best friend, was missing and his first worry was his parents' reactions. She thought that he wasn't going to be of much help to find Barb then. She'll just have to find out on her own.

---

As Becky and Carl were almost back to the Ives home, the woman couldn't stop thinking about the intruder she and her husband heard yesterday. What if they were back? What if the intruder wasn't Will and instead someone dangerous? She felt nervous about having Jane be by herself there, smoking her cigarette and blowing the smoke out of the window.

Carl noticed her nervous look and said, "We'll be there in a minute."

She nodded. "I know, Carl, but..." She sighed. "What if that intruder comes back?"

"Does the girl know how to fend for herself?"

She smiled, remembering times when Jane watched action movies when she was younger and mimicking some fighting moves. "I'm sure she does." Still, they'll have to see when they get there.

---

Back at the home, the boys were in the basement, Mike channeling Will through the walkie-talkie. Whimpering could be heard from it. Lucas wore a long-sleeved shirt with shades of brown, light brown pants, and sneakers while Dustin wore a light-blue jacket, dark jeans, and sneakers. The boys looked weirded out by the fact Mike was still there, in Jane's basement. After she left him in the dust, after THEY left him in the dust, he still managed to get back to her? And she let him stay even though he practically stabbed them in the back by lying? They were both concerned about this...and her.

He lost the signal, thus losing the whimpering. Jane turned to them. "We keep losing the signal, but you did hear that, right?" she asked.

Lucas nodded. "Yeah, a baby," he answered.

Jane gave him a perplexed glare. "What?"

"Jane, you obviously tapped into a baby monitor. It's probably the Blackburns'."

She scoffed. "Did that REALLY sound like a baby to you?" He sighed and looked away from her, frowning. "It was Will! I know it!"

"Jane-"

"I swear to you, he was speaking words last night! Actual words! He was singing that song he likes, even Mike heard him."

Now Lucas scoffed. "Well, I guess if the weirdo heard it..." he replied in a sarcastic tone, making her pout at him.

"You sure you're on the right channel?" Dustin asked her.

She shook her head, but for a different reason. "I don't think it's a channel...I think he's channeling him, somehow."

The curly-haired boy's eyes widened. "Like Professor X." She nodded,

smiling at him.

Meanwhile, the black-haired boy looked at the two of them in utter disbelief. "Do either of you guys really believe this crap?!"

Dustin shrugged. "I mean, remember when Will fell off his bike and broke his finger? He sounded a lot like that."

He shook his head and looked at the two of them sternly. "Did you guys not see what I saw last night?! Will's body was pulled out of the water! He's dead!" The two of them looked away, upset. They did see that and it made Jane take it hard, but that voice, it was undeniable to her.

Mike also frowned and shook his head at him. "No," he replied to him.

He gave him an appalled look, moving his arms out. "No? Why no?"

"Hiding."

Lucas dropped his arms to his sides. "Where? Where is he hiding?" He didn't reply, still not knowing how to explain it to him.

"M-maybe it's his ghost haunting us," Dustin suggested.

"No, it's not his ghost," Jane replied.

Lucas then looked at her. "How would you know?"

She shrugged, looking annoyed at him. "I just do!"

"Then what the hell was that in the water?!"

"I don't know, but it wasn't him! Will is alive, he's out there somewhere! We just need to know where he is!" The boys looked at her worriedly, especially Lucas, since he was thinking that she was giving Mike too much of a benefit of a doubt.

Mike still tried to reach Will, but with no luck. The tomboy sighed and said to him, "Can you turn it off?" He gave her a bit of a puzzled look, but did so. She sighed and looked at the rest of the boys. "This

is no use. We need him to use a stronger radio."

The kids, except the freckled boy, began to think, then Dustin came up with something, smiling a little. "Mr. Clarke's Heathkit ham shack." Jane smiled back at him nodding.

"Yeah, good idea."

Lucas sighed. "The Heathkit's at school, guys," he stated to them. "There's no way we can get the weirdo there without anyone noticing." He then looked at Mike. "I mean, who can trust a kid with a buzz-cut and dark clothes?" The rest of his friends then looked at him, Mike looking at them all nervously. He had a good point. The way Mike looked wasn't all that...well, normal. He might be seen as someone suspicious and things will go south if someone finds him like that.

It was time to give him a makeover.

...

Jane got out some boxes with clothes and costumes in it and she and her friends began digging through each one to find something Mike can wear. The boy himself sat on the couch, watching them look through the boxes. The tomboy looked for a wig he could wear, the African-American boy looked for a shirt and some pants he could wear, and the curly-haired boy looked for socks and shoes for him.

Suddenly, a faint sound of a door opening and closing caught their attention before Becky's voice called out, "Jane?" She tensed up a little, muttering something under her breath before running upstairs.

Just as she turned, she saw Becky there, startling her a little before sighing in relief. The woman smiled and hugged her. "Oh, thank goodness you're alright," she said to her.

She looked a bit confused. "What?" she asked.

Becky released the hug and added, "We thought the intruder might come back here and hurt you, so-"

"Intruder?" Jane raised her eyebrows, making Becky gasp in

realization.

"Aw, shit, I forgot to tell ya." Becky smoked her cigarette again and continued, "Yesterday, while you were gone to school, your uncle and I heard an intruder goin' upstairs and into your room. I didn't think it was you because I saw ya leave for school." The girl's eyes widened, only knowing one possibility of an intruder: Mike. Did he really leave the basement while her aunt and uncle were still there?! Why?!

"I mean..." Becky let out a sigh. "Me and him thought that maybe...your friend Will might've been here." Her eyes widened more at that. She might have never thought of that as another possibility. Maybe it was him...but...the possibility of the "intruder" being Mike was bigger. The woman shrugged. "But we really don't know. Could be someone else, especially since he was found in the quarry yesterday." The girl nodded, frowning.

Becky sighed and gave her another hug, patting her head. "Sweetie, it's alright. I know you're mourning over your friend. I'm here for you, and so is your uncle."

She nodded. "Okay, Auntie."

Suddenly, both females heard Dustin's voice from downstairs, Becky releasing the hug once again. "Are the boys here?" she asked her.

She nodded at her again. "Uh, yeah...I, uh, called them over to..." She trailed off, trying to think of a lie.

Becky thought that she might have called them over concerning about Will, so she asked, "Will?" She nodded once more. She sighed. "You kids have to be pretty torn about it. I'll give you guys some space, then you guys can talk to me if ya like."

Jane smiled at her. "Thanks, Auntie." She smiled back at her and ruffled her hair a little. The girl then walked back downstairs. The woman hoped she was alright.

...

"I never thought I'd be picking out clothes for another guy," Dustin stated as he looked at the pair of pants and hovered them over

Mike's. The boy was standing up for them as they hovered some of the clothing they picked over him.

"It's like playing dress-up or something," Lucas added.

"Dress-up?" Mike asked.

"You know, the thing girls do with clothes."

He raised an eyebrow. "Jane?"

Both the boys chuckled. "Nah, not Jane," Dustin answered. "Don't think Jane was ever girly, to be honest."

Lucas shook his head in agreement. "Yeah, she's no girly girl, that's for sure." Mike wondered what they meant by that, girly girl...

Speak of the devil, the tomboy arrived downstairs and saw the boys, asking, "Any luck?"

They shook their heads. "Not yet," Lucas answered. She then went through the box again and saw a long blonde wig with side-swept bangs. She thought it might fit him if she just cut it short.

"Can either of you guys find a pair of scissors?" she asked her friends.

...

Soon, they picked out the clothes they wanted for him and he was in the bathroom, changing into his disguise. The kids waited, Jane pacing around a little. "Your aunt's not gonna come down here, right?" Dustin asked her.

She nodded. "Yeah, we'll just need to leave out the door here," she answered.

The door then opened, all of them looking at the new Michael. He wore the wig she had, but it was cut short enough to cover his shaved head. He wore a gray and blue collared shirt with black, yellow, and white stripes on it, blue jeans with a black belt, and black and white sneakers. Jane's eyes widened, blushing a little at the sight of him in his disguise. The boys looked pleasantly surprised of how he looked.

"Wow," the curly-haired boy said.

"Yeah, you look-" Lucas added before Jane cut him off.

"Cute," she murmured under her breath. While Lucas looked at her weird and Dustin grinned a little, Mike looked puzzled. He heard that word before, but he never knew what it meant.

"Cute?" he asked.

She suddenly realized what she said and said, "Cool. I-I think I stuttered. You look, uh, cool. Yeah, really cool." He nodded, smiling at her before going back to the bathroom to look at himself in the mirror. The kids followed.

He nodded his head as he said, "Cool." He then mouthed, "Cute." He did like the way he looked, but began to wonder what that word meant. Jane still felt embarrassed that she even said that. Dustin and Lucas looked at each other, chuckling among themselves about what she did there.

---

Back in the labs, a man willing to go into the hole and investigate what was on the other side was getting ready to go in, getting hooked up by the new contraption put in place. In another room, Dr. Brenner and Dr. Wheeler observed him, still wearing those hazmat suits they had.

The man turned to them and asked, "You boys hear me alright in there?"

Dr. Wheeler pressed a button and replied, "Loud and clear, Shepard."

"Good luck in there," Dr. Brenner added before his comrade let go of the button. They both then saw Shepard slowly approach the mysterious hole and enter into it, breaking through the goo and disappearing inside. Both men looked intently, wondering if this will really work or not.

---

**Done! What do you guys think? Any mistakes or typos?**



Never understood how El got back to Mike's house in this episode, especially since he left her at the dust. So I did make him actually go back by himself in this AU since the boys left him in the dust as well.

Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter! (P.S.: For any of those that care, I'm feeling better now, thankfully.)

\*EDIT of 07/02/19:

-Replaced "many hours" with "long"

-Had Mike see him in the Upside Down instead of feeling his presence 'cause I read the graphic novel with Will in the Upside Down, so yeah.

-Replaced "having her daughter distraught over what happened to her friend." to "having her daughters distraught over what happened to her friends."

-Connected "before she looked away" with "scoffed."

-Italicized "So come on and let me know...should I stay or should I go?"

-Replaced "baby" with "sweetie" and "sweetheart"

-Italicized Lucas's dialogue over the walkie-talkie

-Added "guys" in "Do either of you guys really believe this crap?!"

-Made Mike's wig blonde instead of black

## 10. Mouth-Breather

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Back in the high school, Kali wasn't listening to a reading by her language arts teacher. She was looking about, still worried about what might have happened to Barbara. That mystery was eating away at her, making her want to find the answer to it. She didn't feel like going to school anyway, so-

Suddenly, the door opened and revealed a staff member, everyone's attention going towards her. "Kali Ives?" she asked, the girl stiffening at the mention of her name. She looked at her and asked, "Can you come with me please?" Nervous about this, she nodded as she stood up and grabbed her stuff. She thought it was probably the police going to question her. Well, she knew what to do.

...

In the empty cafeteria, Officer Powell and Officer Callahan were questioning her with her aunt and uncle there since Terry was unavailable due to her work. She told them about her, Steve, and friends "just hanging out" and the argument she had with her. "So, this argument you and Barbara had," Powell said. "What was it about exactly?"

The Indian girl sighed and answered, "Uh...Barbara just wanted to leave and I was getting impatient with her, so I told her to go."

"Then what happened?"

"I went upstairs and...put on some dry clothes."

The men gave her skeptical looks as well as Becky and Carl, but Powell continued, "Then the next day, you went back to find her and saw a bear?"

She shook her head. She may have looked at the figure for, like, two seconds, but she knew it wasn't shaped like an animal. "Not a bear. I

don't even think it was an animal. Whatever it was, I think it took Barbara. Did you guys check behind his house?" Her two relatives looked sorry for her.

"We did," Callahan replied, shaking his head. "Nothing there. No sign of whatever was there, like a bear."

"And no car," Officer Powell added.

Kali looked shocked at the two of them when they said that. "What?"

"Listen, we figured that Barbara came back last night before taking off and leaving to somewhere," the officer with the glasses stated.

"Did she ever talk to you about running off or-" the other cop asked.

Kali instantly shook her head. "No. Barbara would NEVER do that, ever."

"Maybe she was just upset that you were hanging out with this boy more often?" Her eyes widened at the suggestion as Powell looked down at his paper. "Um...Steve Harrington?"

"No!" she answered.

"Maybe she was jealous because she saw you go up to Steve's room?"

She shook her head. "No, it wasn't like that. Steve and I are just friends! Nothing more."

The men looked at each other, their skeptical looks back before looking at her again, Callahan asking, "Now, was this before or after you changed?" Kali sighed, feeling stressed about her being questioned like this. She hoped this could be done and over with.

Meanwhile, her aunt and uncle did look more skeptical than the officers did at her. They knew she was lying, but they both thought not to comment on the matter.

---

Terry was serving food and beer to customers, but she never even bothered putting a fake smile on her face. She kept thinking about

yesterday. The news of an intruder in the home, that...thing she saw behind the wallpaper, Will's death...yesterday had to be the most stressful and nerve-wracking day she ever experienced outside of her former work.

Definitely since she quit her former work.

She thought that since Will died last night, she could be just recklessly speculating that his disappearance was connected to the lab. However, she wanted to hold onto the possibility that maybe even his death was connected to the labs. She didn't know for sure though, and it was eating away at her. She almost never wanted to go to work and investigate this on her own. Her sister needed to stay out of it because she didn't know and she'll never know. Not on her watch.

"Terry? Terry!" shouted one of her co-workers to her, making her snap out of her thoughts and turn to her. A blonde-haired waitress looked annoyed at her and dropped her shoulders. "Will you stop standing around and do your damn job?"

The woman deeply sighed and answered, "Right. Sorry, Cathy." She then saw a man enter inside and sit at the bar. Her eyes widened at the sight of him. That man was no ordinary man...

That was Hawkins Police Chief Jim Hopper.

Why the hell was he here? She rarely ever saw him at the pub. What, was this another occasion? Since he discovered Will Byers dead yesterday and he probably needed to wind down?

The bartender approached Hopper and greeted, "Hi, welcome to Hideaway, sir. I'm Diana-"

"Hey, Diana," he greeted her back, interrupting her. "Say, is Terry Ives working here today?" The woman in question tensed up when he mentioned her name, her eyes widening.

"Oh, uh, yeah, she's right there." The brunette then pointed at the dirty-blonde-haired woman, her fists clenching as the chief looked back at her and smiled.

"Can she serve me for now?" Why did he want that? What DID he want from her?

---

The kids rode through downtown on their bikes, the boys wearing their coats, Jane wearing a brown jacket, and Mike wearing her coat. He was sitting behind Jane again and looked around. He looked a bit interested at his surroundings, never seeing a place like this before. He smiled a little since he liked this.

---

Finally, they arrived into the school, walking down the path to the AV Club room. "So, if anyone sees us, look sad," the tomboy said to the rest of the group, them nodding at her.

They heard the P.A go on and said, *"Attention, students. There will be an assembly for Will Byers right now."* While that was said, Mike looked at the boys and made a crying gesture to see if he thought that was sad, the two of them nodding at him. *"I repeat, there will be an assembly to honor Will Byers. Do not go to fourth period."*

The kids finally arrived at the room and Jane tried to open the door, but the knob was stiff, making her groan. "It's locked."

Her friends looked at her with baffled looks. "What?" asked Lucas before he tried opening the door and failing to do so.

Dustin quickly thought up of something and looked at Mike. "Hey, Mike, can you use your powers?" he asked him.

Before he could answer, Mr. Clarke suddenly appeared and said, "Kids?" All of them turned to him, their faces being of surprise.

"Uh, hey," Lucas greeted awkwardly.

He looked at them with a worried expression. "The assembly's about to start."

Jane nodded. "W-we know, we're just..." she replied before trailing off.

"Upset, y'know?" Lucas added.

"Yeah, uh, definitely u-upset," Dustin also added.

"We just really need some alone time," Jane said.

"To, uh...cry," the curly-haired boy finished.

The teacher nodded at them and gave them a reassuring look now. "Listen to me, kids. I get it, I really do." The trio looked sad, since even though there's a chance they'll find him, he was still missing, still out there alone somewhere. "I know this is a hard time for you all, but why don't we be there, for Will?" They slowly nodded at him before he got out the keys. "And then..." He then tossed them to the curly-haired tomboy. "The Heathkit is all yours for the rest of the day. What d'ya say?" The three looked at him with happy looks. As long as they attend, they'll be able to find Will, once and for all.

Mr. Clarke then looked at Mike and looked pleasantly surprised. "Oh, I don't believe we've met. What's your name, young man?" he asked him.

The kids looked at him with a bit of worry as he awkwardly answered, "M-Michael..."

He nodded and gave him a warm smile, extending his hand out to him. "Well, hey there, Michael. Nice to meet you." He looked at his hand and thought of Benny, feeling a bit distressed. However, he remembered what he did with the handshake, so he shook his hand. "Do you know these kids?"

"Yes..." he responded before the kids filled in more blanks for him.

"Y-yeah! He's my, um..." Jane said, trying to think up of something.

"Cousin!" Lucas said.

"Second cousin, to be exact!" Dustin stated, holding up two fingers.

Jane sighed. "He's here for, uh, Will's funeral."

Mr. Clarke nodded at the kids, looking at the freckled one. "Welcome to Hawkins Middle. I wish you were here on better circumstances."

"Thank you," he replied as he nodded at him, not knowing how else to respond to that.

"Where are you from exactly?"

The kids looked at Mike with worry again as he shook his head. "Bad place-" he answered before the kids cut him off.

"Norway!" Dustin answered.

The tomboy nodded. "I got a lot of Norwegian family on my mama's side," she added.

"He absolutely HATES it there!"

"So cold!" Lucas added.

"Sub-zero."

Mr. Clarke nodded again, only this time, it was in awkwardness. "Shall we, then?" he asked them.

"Yeah," the trio responded as they all walked to the cafeteria.

...

As they arrived, Dustin opened the door, having it make a sound as it hit the wall. The principal stopped talking and everyone turned their attention towards them. All of them felt embarrassed, especially Dustin.

"Abort," he whispered as he turned back to go away. However, Lucas stopped him and they all entered in, taking seats as they listened to the speech at the assembly.

---

Becky and Carl drove Kali home since she said that she didn't feel like she could focus when she was grieving. Though Carl initially hesitated, Becky argued with him a little that they should bring her home and not tell Terry about it, so they did. Kali stormed inside, feeling very upset, while the two tried to follow suit. "Kali, wait-" Becky said to her before getting cut off.

"Just leave me alone," she said to her in a distraught tone as she went upstairs.

"Kali!" Her niece stopped and looked down at her with a look of irritation. "Listen, you can talk to me. I'm your aunt, you're my niece. I'll listen to you. Me, your uncle, your mother-

"I just need some privacy. Is that too much to ask?!"

The short-haired woman sighed and looked up at her. "Kali-

"What?"

Carl, getting annoyed by her attitude, said to her sternly, "Don't bring that attitude to her, young lady!"

"I just need to be alone, Carl!" He looked displeased to her, Becky putting her hand on his shoulder as the teenager got upstairs and went into her room. The man sighed and muttered, "Teenagers..." He then left to the living room, his wife following him.

"Her best friend is missing, Carl!" she said to him. "At least I tried to be calm with her."

"She still shouldn't have brought that attitude to you. I had to be stern with her-

She rolled her shoulders and scoffed. "Yelling at her's not gonna fix it though!"

"Neither was being calm to her, was it?!" Both of them glared at each other, being upset with one another. Becky then stormed to the kitchen to grab a snack, hoping to be away from him for just a moment. She began to think about what happened to the both of them after they got married. Instead of being an odd yet loving couple, they argue as if they're going to get a divorce. Hell, that might happen because he had changed since the wedding...did he? They were arguing more often, but...

Whatever, she just needed to be away from him at the moment.

...



Meanwhile, in her room, Kali sat on the bed and set her things down next to her, about to cry and sob. No one would listen to her, no one would get to the point with her, she needed some time alone to think and no one gave it to her, she hated that. She just wanted to find out where her best friend was. Was that too difficult or something?

She got out the pieces of the picture she picked up from yesterday and looked at the piece with Barb in it. She frowned, trying to hold back tears from just looking at her. She put it back down next to another piece...which seemed to connect. Curious, Kali looked at that piece, seeing some sort of figure there. Her eyes widened, making her think of something she could do.

She arranged the pieces of the photos together and then used the tape she had in her room to piece them all together. Once she was done, she got a good look at it. The figure was shining a little, showing that it was human-like, but not...human. Her eyes widened and her jaw dropped. Jonathan took this picture, right? He had to know something about this, especially...that. What the hell was it? Did it take Barbara?

---

Back in the lower levels of the labs, the two doctors looked at how much time Shepard's been in the hole and then looked at each other. They communicated through expressions and knew what to do next. Dr. Wheeler pressed the comm button and asked, "Shepard, are you there? Confirm comm." There was no answer for a few seconds, the two men beginning to worry. "Shepard, come in. Confirm comm." They waited for an answer, their worry growing.

*"This is Shepard, confirming. Over,"* the man responded, the two men now feeling relieved and smiling.

"Shepard, where are you and can you describe to us what you see in there?" Dr. Brenner asked. "Over."

*"The visibility's low. I'm one click south of the rift."* The two men nodded. *"Everything's still here, but all eroded somehow. Covered in blood-"* Suddenly, they both growling through the comm, their worry coming back again.

"Shepard, do you copy?" Dr. Wheeler asked. All that he and Brenner got was the man heavily breathing and more growling. "Shepard, can you hear me? Over."

*"Th-there's something else in here!"* A crunching noise was then heard, both the men looking aghast as the sirens rang off.

"Reel him in..." Dr. Brenner commanded another man next to him and his comrade. He didn't do anything.

"Reel him back in!" Dr. Wheeler yelled at him as the man pressed the button to make the contraption reel the man back in. Both men looked at the hole in horror, wondering if they could get him out of there in time.

*"Pull me out!"* Shepard yelled constantly. They saw the rope moving back and forth very frantically until it suddenly stopped, the rope touching the ground. Both men knew he didn't make it, looking absolutely shocked by this.

As the rope was completely reeled out, Shepard was nothing more than a bloodied piece of fabric. The men's horrified looks amplified before the two looked down. They were dealing with something dangerous...very dangerous. The two then looked at each other. "Our work just got more difficult than expected," Dr. Wheeler said to his friend.

"Well, this kind of work is never easy," Dr. Brenner replied. "We'll just need to work harder than usual."

---

As the principal was talking about Will's death and how it will affect the school, Jane and the boys looked around, seeing some uninterested and faked sad faces from their fellow peers. Jane looked disappointed. "Look at all these guys, faking it," she whispered to Lucas.

He nodded. "Yeah, they probably didn't even know his name 'til today," he whispered back at her.

Suddenly, the four heard Troy snickering, their attention towards him

and James smirking. "What?" James asked his friend.

"This is SO stupid," Troy answered quietly. "I mean, who's even interested in this shit?" He then mocked the principal's speech like a mime, James chuckling.

The trio looked at them in disgust and dismay about this, Mike raising an eyebrow at their behavior. He knew it was wrong of them to do that, so he muttered, "Mouth-breather."

Jane, a bit surprised that he identified Troy well, turned to him, the boy nodding and focusing back on the speech. She decided to do the same as well, wanting to deal with them later...

...

When the assembly ended, everyone got off of the bleachers and were about to walk out of the gym. Jane with the boys, however, decided to walk to Troy and shout out, "Hey, hey Troy!" The bullies didn't listen to her, so she shouted one more time, "Troy!" He and his friend finally stopped and turned to her and her friends, annoyed. She crossed her arms and looked in much disapproval. "This isn't some funny joke."

"What d'ya say, tranny?" the brunette asked.

"I saw what you guys did over there. I think laughing at an assembly about Will's death is messed up."

He and James scoffed at her. "Didn't you hear the counselor, tranny?" James asked. "Grief shows itself in funny ways."

As some kids gathered up to see what's going on, the boys looked at them with so much dismay, even Mike. "Besides, what's so sad about, anyways? Will's probably in fairyland now, prancing with all the other little fairies, all happy and gay!" He and James laughed at that and began to leave. Jane was so angry that she couldn't even control herself. Clenching her fists hard, she stormed to Troy and shoved him to the ground, surprising both him and the taller bully. Everyone that crowded around them, even the boys, gasped and murmured some things among each other about that.

"Screw you!" she yelled at him before pushing James as well. "And screw you too!" She turned her back on them and began to leave.

At this point, Troy just about had it with her. He didn't even care if she was female...he felt the need to yell at her face. He stood up and stormed to her, shouting, "You know what, tranny?!" She froze and turned back to him, looking scared and backing away. "I think you're a piece of sh-" Suddenly, he stopped, mid-storm. Everyone looked surprised, especially the tomboy, James, and Troy himself.

He looked very flabbergasted at this. He couldn't even move his body. Suddenly, he started to pee his pants. "Dude, Troy's peeing himself!" shouted one kid from the crowd as not only them, but also the boys and Jane erupted in laughter. Troy never looked so embarrassed in his life and James had second-hand embarrassment.

Wondering if this was Mike's doing, the curly-haired tomboy looked back and saw his head tilted down. He was chuckling, his nose bleeding a little as he looked at her. He gave her a smile and wiped his nose. She gave him a smile back. He didn't need to do that, but she was glad that he did.

"Hey, what's going on here?!" the principal asked concernedly as the crowd began to disperse.

Lucas ran to Jane and said, "Jane, let's go!" She nodded as she left with the rest of the boys. That was seriously the best thing they've seen Mike do, giving Troy what he deserved and saving Jane in the process. They were actually pretty thankful of him for being around.

---

After calling Joyce, Kali arrived at a funeral home alone with just her purse, hoping to see Jonathan since she thought that he was probably there for...well, setting his brother's funeral. She walked around before seeing him in a room with coffins. She stopped and looked at him, entering in a little. He quickly noticed her and looked back at her. "Um...can you just give me a second?" he asked the man showing him the coffins.

"Of course," he replied.

The auburn-haired guy then approached her slowly. "Hey..."

"Hey..." she greeted back. "Your mum said you would be here." He nodded, looking distressed. She felt really bad for him, since his little brother was dead and all. "I just...want to talk to you about something for a second." She pointed out the door. "If you don't mind?" He shook his head, but wondered what she wanted to talk to him about. Maybe it was the photos...

...

Sitting on a bench outside of the room, Jonathan looked at the photo Kali taped up closely. She tapped her finger on one of her hands, waiting for an answer. "This looks like it could be some sort of perspective distortion," he stated before shaking his head. "But I wasn't using the wide angle." He then shrugged and handed the photo back to her. "I don't know, it's weird."

She sighed, feeling a bit upset. "And you're sure you only saw Barbara?" she asked him.

He nodded. "Yeah. She was there one second and then...she was gone. I figured she bolted."

The black-haired girl crossed her arms and leaned back onto the bench. "The cops think that she ran away, but..." She shook her head. "They don't know her, unsurprisingly. Then, I went back to Steve's and I...I think I saw something, like...some weird man or..." She sighed once again. Maybe she was overthinking all of this. She didn't know why she was sharing this with the guy that took her photo in her bra. "I'm so sorry." She then stood up and grabbed her purse. "I shouldn't have come here today. You have your brother's funeral, and I...I should go."

She was then about to leave, but he was actually curious about what she said, so he asked her, "What did he look like? The man you saw in the woods?" The girl stopped and turned back to him, looking surprised.

"Uh...well..." she began, trying to think up of a way to describe him. "I didn't get a good look, but I think...I think he didn't have-

"A face?" Her eyes widened at his reply. So he did know something about this...it was just what she needed, but...

"How did you know that?" she asked him.

---

Back in the pub, Terry sat next to Hopper, who was asking her about...her former work that was Hawkins Labs. She felt surprised that he was even investigating them when he would've been investigating Will. She thought during the questioning that maybe he was speculating about them being involved with the young boy. But how?

"So, you haven't communicated with them in years?" he asked her.

She shook her head at him. "No," she answered. "Not since Martin and I broke off our marriage."

He nodded, ashing his cigarette and blowing out smoke. "Why?"

She looked puzzled at him. "Excuse me?"

"Why did you and Brenner break it off?"

She felt her blood running cold. She remembered that one night...that one night that prevented her from answering his question.

"Terry?"

She shook her head at him once again. "I'm sorry, but I can't answer that."

He looked concerned for her. "Why not?"

That night...she couldn't even tell him about it. It had to stay in her mind or else, they would...

Hopper sighed and placed a hand on her shoulder. "Terry..." She broke out of her thoughts and looked at him. "What did he do to you that makes you not answer my question?" Her eyes widened. Damn, he caught up fast.

She shook her head at him again. "I can't..." she muttered.

"Why, Terry?"

"I. Can't." She then got off of her seat and went back to doing her shift. She didn't want to put herself in danger-no, not just her. Her sister, her brother-in-law, her daughters, they can be affected too, especially the latter. That was why she couldn't answer. She couldn't risk it...yet she kept thinking that they're somehow involved in this situation.

Hopper looked back at her, frowning. Now he got even more curious. If one of their former workers can't talk to him more about this, then they were up to something, something terrible.

Suddenly, a man came in, both of the adults looking at him and recognizing him. He was an aging man and overweight. They both knew who he was...

The man that found Will's body.

While Terry shook it off and continued working, Hopper wanted to deal with him alone.

...

Even though she was serving customers, Terry couldn't get her attention away the man that found his body. She was thinking about her suspicion about Hawkins Labs being involved in Will's death, so maybe...he was involved in that too.

She shook her head. Reckless speculation. Maybe he was just patrolling around and found the body. Nothing more. Probably.

Suddenly, she saw him leave Hopper, leaving a tip for Diana. He walked right past her. She saw his upset expression, wondering what Hopper talked to him about. Probably about finding Will's body in the quarry. She looked back at Hopper, who took one last drink and tipped Diana before standing up and leaving with him. The woman looked puzzled.

"Hopper?" she asked.

"Excuse me," he replied as he walked past her as well, leaving with the man. She finally put two and two together. There was probably something suspicious about that man and Hopper was chasing after him about it.

She looked down and began thinking about something. Hopper asked her about the labs and her job there before asking why she and Martin had a divorce AND he was chasing down the man that found Will's body. That would mean that he was really suspicious that Hawkins Labs might really have something to do with all this crazy shit going on. It made so much sense! At least she wasn't the only one to think about that!

She looked back at where they left. She thought that maybe she should investigate with him. However, doing that risks her safety from them. When she helps him out, they will be after her too, even her family. She didn't want that, but...the mystery of it all was eating away at her at a rapid rate.

"Terry?" asked Diana, breaking her thoughts and making her look at her. "What's going on? You've been spacing out lately."

She sighed. She was, but for good reason. She needed to know if the labs were involved in all of this or not. So she'll do it. She'll have to protect her family, but she'll take the risk. "I need to go," she replied as she brought the tray of food down to the customers that ordered it and began to leave.

She went into the kitchen and grabbed her purse, some of her fellow waitresses looking at her in confusion. "Terry? Where are you going?" asked Cathy.

"Home," she instantly answered.

"But your shift's not even close to done!" said another waitress.

"Tell George and Sally that I'll be gone for family matters." Before the women even answered, she got out of the kitchen and outside of the pub. She instantly tensed up and froze when she saw Hopper with his gun out. Why the hell did he have his gun out?



He huffed and put the gun in the back pocket of his jeans, looking for the man he assaulted for answers, but instead saw a shocked Terry, being a bit puzzled. What the hell was she doing out there? He walked up to her, just as she walked up to him, and said, "Listen, you didn't see anything." He was about to leave, but Terry grabbed his arm, stopping him and making him look at her.

"Let me help," she said to him. He gave her a puzzled look before she elaborated, "Let me investigate with you."

He sighed. "You couldn't tell me about why you divorced your ex-husband and former employer, but you want to help me investigate?"

She sighed as well and shook his arm. "I'll tell you anything you need to know if you let me help. I think they might have something to do with all this crazy shit that's been happening lately. Sooner or later, they'll come to me. I even sorta talked to Joyce about it."

He looked surprised. "You what?"

"I'll elaborate if you let me help you."

"What about your job?"

"They can wait."

He raised an eyebrow. "'They'?"

She shook her head, realizing her mistake. "Look, do you need the extra help or not?" He then thought about it. She was an ex-employee and she probably had all the information he needed for his investigation. Perhaps a little help wouldn't hurt, so he nodded, making her nod back.

"Meet me at the coroner at eight, alright?" he asked her.

"Okay," she answered as they both left to go to their cars. Terry didn't want to investigate in this stupid waitress dress, so she had to change.

---

**Stopping here. What did you guys think? Any typos or mistakes?**

How did I handle Terry and Hopper's interactions? I figured that maybe they should work together since they both are on the same mindset that Hawkins Lab has something to do with the crazy shit going on. Hope you guys don't mind that!

Also, of course Troy's not going to...you know, assault a girl, especially in public. He may not see her as a girl, but the rest of the school might do, so yeah. Why not just have his intention to just yell at her? It's less harmless...

Anyways, keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you on the next chapter!

**\*EDIT of 07/02/19:**

-Added "again" in "their skeptical looks back before looking at her again,"

-\*frequent change\* Changed Diane's name to Diana 'cause Diane is the name of Hopper's ex-wife and that's just weird

-Added "in question" in "The woman in question tensed up when he mentioned her name, her eyes widening."

-Made Becky wonder if Carl changed since the wedding and acknowledge that they argue more often.

-Added "Whatever, she just needed to be away from him at the moment."

-Fixed a typo

-Removed ", letting out another sigh"

## 11. That's It

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

The kids finally got into the room, locked the door, and only turned on one light, showing the Heathkit. The trio directed Mike to it and let him sit down in front of it. "So what now?" Lucas asked Jane.

"He'll find Will," she answered as she turned it on and began to change the radio frequencies. "Right, Mike?" There was no answer from him other than a nod, the freckled boy staring at the Heathkit. When it was finally in static, he closed his eyes and moved them around, now trying to channel to Will the best he could.

---

*In the isolated room, Mike sat in front of a picture of a man, looking at it with a curious look. This time, Dr. Wheeler and Dr. Brenner were with him, pouring themselves two glasses of water. They set the glasses on the table and took seats next to him. "Michael Eleven?" Dr. Brenner said to the boy. "Are you listening?" The boy did, but kept staring at the picture.*

*"Michael," Dr. Wheeler said, now making him look at him. "Will you answer the doctor?"*

*He reluctantly nodded and looked to the white-haired man. "Y-yes, doctor," he answered.*

*He nodded and pointed at the photo. "That man before you, we need you to find him."*

*"Hurt him?" Michael asked.*

*"No, son," Dr. Wheeler answered. "We don't need you to hurt him, just listen to him."*

*"Listen?"*

*Dr. Brenner put a hand on his shoulder. "Yes, boy. Listen to what he says and repeat those words back to us."*

*"Just like what we did with those nursery rhymes, remember?" Dr. Wheeler then placed his hand on his hand, making him tense up a little and look back at him. He saw him smile, but it wasn't that creepy. In a way, it was...comforting. "Can you do that, for me and the doctor?"*

*This was something new to him and he didn't know what to expect. However, the doctors wanted him to do it, so he had to. He nodded and replied, "Yes, Dad." He then looked back to the photo, analyzing the man's face for a bit. He then closed his eyes and had all of his focus on finding him.*

*He finally heard him say some random things in another isolated room, such as toys and adjectives. He kept listening, not saying a word to the doctors. The two men looked at each other, Dr. Wheeler sighing and saying to his son, "Michael, can you repeat the words?" Suddenly, the power went out, surprising the two doctors, and the P.A. system came on, the man's voice going through it. They looked at each other again, smiling and thinking about how far they can go with this new ability Michael had.*

---

His eyes were still closed and the kids watched him intently, hearing the static warp a little. "I think he's doing it," the tomboy stated.

"Crazy..." Dustin added.

Lucas frowned at the both of them. "Calm down, you two," he said to the both of them. "He just closed his eyes." Just when he said that, the light went out in a mere second. All the kids looked up in shock.

"Holy-" the curly-haired boy muttered before hearing some clanging on the radio. The clanging got louder and the kids listened intently, wondering... "What the hell is that?" None of them knew...

But Mike did.

---

Becky was watching TV while Carl was upstairs taking a shower, sitting on the couch and smoking her fifth cigarette, the rest being in her ashtray. Never has she smoked continuously. She smoked at least two-to-three times a day, not five. And she didn't feel like stopping. She felt so nervous and worried about what was happening since she

arrived.

First, there was the news of a missing kid. That missing kid happened to be one of Jane's best friends and ended up dead. Then, she and Carl heard an intruder in the house. Who that was is a mystery to the both of them. And then, Kali's best friend goes missing as well. She hoped she wasn't dead, but who knows? Finally, she and her husband have been arguing more than usual. Maybe he was right, maybe it wasn't a good time to visit her sister and nieces.

Also, Terry was acting weird. Again...she didn't act weird since her divorce, so...why now? What the hell was going on in this town?

The door opened, all of a sudden, and Terry walked into the house. She closed the door behind her and began to walk upstairs, all without even greeting her own sister.

"Terry?" Becky asked. "Don't you have work?"

"I'm on break," she replied as she went to her room and closed the door. She dropped her arms to the sides. There she was, acting weird again. What the hell is going on with her?

...

In her room, Terry closed the blinds and began undressing. After a bit, she dressed into a green long-sleeved collared shirt, waist-high bootcut jeans, and casual black heels. She looked herself at the mirror, frowning. This was the same outfit she wore that day.

The day where she discovered more about her ex-husband's true intentions.

---

*It was her day-off, but Terry decided to surprise him with something by going there and showing it to him. She felt that they just needed to talk and maybe she'll convince him to stop, stop the brutality of it all with his best friend, and live a normal life with her and their daughters.*

*She asked around, finding an answer to where he might be. She heard that he might be in a certain patient's room, so she headed there, hoping that he wasn't doing anything too serious. She could always get him when he*

was done.

*When she arrived at the room, she knocked the door. No one responded, making her think that he was probably working. To make sure, she peeked through the small window. Her breath hitched and her eyes widened so much when she saw a very young Jane and young Kali in there...looking at two different blocks and having headgears on their heads. The woman felt everything in her body run cold. She knew what they were doing.*

*They were testing to see if the two girls were capable of going through those goddamned, torturous experiments.*

*As if her discovery about what they really do to the kids she'd meet and treated well wasn't enough.*

*They had to.*

*He had to.*

*She didn't want that.*

*She quickly tried opening the door, but the knob wouldn't budge. She then kept pounding the door and shouting, "MARTIN!" She saw everyone look at her from the room. Dr. Wheeler looked annoyed while Dr. Brenner looked apathetic. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO OUR CHILDREN?! YOU SON OF A BITCH!" He still gave her an apathetic face as a sudden pair of arms locked themselves around both of hers and dragged her away. "YOU SICK BASTARD! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING TO THEM?!"*

*Never in her life has she felt so mad, so furious, so hellbent on a human. Only he made her feel that way.*

*She will never forget that.*

---

"Terry!" Becky shouted through the door, banging on it. That broke her flashback and made her pant. "Earth to Terry! What the hell is going on?!"

She looked at the door and let out a heavy sigh. Her sister and her brother-in-law would be safe if she didn't tell them. "N-nothing," she lied.

She heard her scoff. "Don't bullshit me! Y'know that isn't gonna work, you've known for years."

The mother sighed again, thinking of what else to tell her, something that can be convincing. After all, Becky was as stubborn as a mule, ever since they were baby girls.

She walked to the door and opened it, revealing a now distressed and worried-looking Becky. "Why the hell are you outta your uniform?"

She took a deep breath and said, "Becky..." The short-haired woman nodded, listening to her. "I just...I just need to relieve some stress. You know, from Will's death and Jane to Kali and Barbara...I just need a break from all of this. I just need to make all of this stress go away." She was about to leave her, but Becky grabbed her shoulders firmly and stopped her.

"Terry, listen to me. I know a lot of crazy bullshit has been happening lately and I know since it affects Jane and Kali and even Joyce, it affects you too. Trust me, I'm affected too." She placed a hand on her chest, looking distraught. "I...I feel the same, Terry. All I expected from this visit was a nice week with you 'n the girls. And what did I get? A dead kid, a missing girl, and you actin' very damn odd. Did I want that shit when Carl and I came here? No!" Terry was silent, listening to her sister. "But I'm trying. I'm trying to cope with it, I'm trying to make you all cope with it. So, for once, just this once, can you do that for me? Can you let me try to make you feel better?"

She was absolutely silent. Her sister was right. Everyone was on edge lately and Becky seemed to try to get everyone to get themselves together. That was Becky, alright, trying to give support to others when they needed it. That was just her, that and her stubbornness. She nodded at her. "Alright," she answered her, feeling her hands slowly get off her shoulders. "I'm sorry, I just..."

Becky interrupted her by giving her a hug. "It's alright, sis. I don't blame ya for actin' the way you are." She then released from it and suggested, "Maybe we can calm down by making somethin' and watching those cheesy soap operas together."

Terry smiled and giggled a little, thinking it was a stupid idea, but a

good idea as well. It wasn't close to eight, so she replied, "Sure. I don't feel like going back to work anyway. Just like old times." Back when they were younger, the two sisters would cook together and eat whatever they cooked while watching some dramas. It was their weird way of bonding.

Becky giggled back. "Just like old times." The women then laughed together and walked downstairs, about to kill some time with cooking and watching TV.

---

The kids kept anticipating to hear more from the radio, then a weak voice said, "*Mom...?*" All of their eyes widened and they all looked at each other, absolutely shocked to hear the voice.

Will's voice.

"No way..." Lucas muttered.

"*Mom...please...Mom!*" They all knew what to do: try and communicate with him.

Jane pressed the button and shouted, "Will?!"

"Can you hear us?!" the black-haired boy yelled.

"We're here! Can you hear us?!" the curly-haired boy asked frantically.

"*H-hello...? Mom?!?*" he replied, not hearing them. The trio looked concerned and scared.

"Why isn't he answering us?!" Lucas asked.

"I don't know!" Jane answered. They all were on edge, hearing the boy's voice again and it was in panic.

Trying to still channel him, Mike began to strain himself, shaking a little. He kept trying and trying.

"*Mom? Mom...Mom! It's coming!*" The three kids looked mortified, wondering what the hell he was talking about. "*I-it's like home, but it's*



*dark...it's so dark and empty and cold!"* They all looked at each other, now wondering where he was talking about. Where the hell was he?  
*"Mom? Mom!"*

"Oh my God..." Jane muttered, shaking in fear for him. She couldn't imagine what he was going through right now. This made her want to go wherever the hell he was and save him. But his description was so vague and confusing...

Suddenly, the fuse of the Heathkit exploded and the wires sparked, causing the three kids to jolt back and yelp a little. As Mike opened his eyes, it caught on fire and the light turned on. They panicked, the telekinetic boy panting and feel worn out. His nose was bleeding and the veins on his face became a bit visible. The fire alarm rang and he looked at the Heathkit in shock. He didn't mean to do that to it. The boys scrambled around and got the fire extinguisher, spraying the fire with it.

When the fire was gone, Jane turned Mike to her and she asked in worry, "Mike, are you okay?" He kept panting. She saw the veins and weary look on his face, her worry heightening more. "C-can you move?" He still didn't answer her. Now she was very worried for him, looking at the boys. "Help him up. We're getting out of here." They nodded as they put down the extinguisher and lifted Mike from his seat by his arms. They spotted a cart, so they put him on that.

Jane opened the door and Dustin pushed the cart out with Lucas. They all ran from the school, hoping to get back home so that he can rest.

---

In the high school's photo room, Jonathan set up the machine pressed down on the picture. Kali was with him, witnessing this. "What are you doing?" she asked him.

"Brightening and enlarging," he answered as he looked through a microscope and adjusted the settings.

The Indian girl sighed. "Did your mum tell you anything else? Like, where it might have gone to?"

He shook his head. "No, just that it came out of a wall." She nodded. How can a thing like that come through a wall? He mentioned that it wasn't broken too, so just...how?

The machine let out a ding, making Jonathan press a button to switch it off. He removed the photo from it and placed it face-down on the water, eventually being submerged. "How long does this take?"

"Not long."

She nodded again, silence roaming around the room. Out of nowhere, Kali asked, "Have you been doing photography for a while?"

He looked at her and nodded. "Yeah," he answered, looking away from her. "I...well, I guess I'd rather observe people than to...you know, talk to them."

Kali nodded once more. "Really?"

He scoffed. "I know. It's weird."

She shook her head. "No, I don't think so."

He chuckled nervously. "Yeah, it is. It's just..." He took a deep breath. "Sometimes...people don't say what they really think. You capture the right moment though..." He then smiled and looked at her again. "It says more."

She began to smile as well. She understood that. Though the memory was vague, she did remember not talking as much to other kids when she was at the orphanage. She'd either do something by herself or observe other kids talking and having fun without her. That all changed when her mother and father adopted her. She then thought of something. "Then what did you think I was I saying?"

He gave her a puzzled look. "What?"

"In that photo of me, taking my shirt off."

"O-oh." He heavily sighed and put a hand on the back of his neck for a second. "I shouldn't have taken that. I'm...uh..." He then looked at her sorrowfully. "I'm so sorry."

She sighed again. She hated that he did that, but he sounded very sincere, so she plastered on a smile. "It's alright, just don't do it again."

He nodded at her. "Of course, it's just..." Suddenly, Kali looked down at the picture, seeing it was done and the mysterious creature now in full view.

Her smile dropped. "That's it," she muttered under her breath, pointing at the picture and having Jonathan see. "That's what I saw back there."

Jonathan's eyes widened and he hitched his breath. "M-my mom...I thought she was crazy 'cause she said...that the body back at the quarry wasn't Will's body, that he was alive." He looked back at her. "And if Will is still alive-"

"Then so is Barbara," Kali added, looking shocked. "Oh my God..." That had to be the thing that took the both of them. Now they both got the answer they wanted.

---

Back at the lab, the two doctors were walking in a hallway together, speaking to each other about how they were going to deal with the situation since it got more harder than expected. Suddenly, one worker ran to them and shouted, "Dr. Brenner, Dr. Wheeler!" The two stopped walking and talking as they faced the man. "You two need to hear this, especially you, Dr. Brenner."

The two men were puzzled, the one with the glasses looking at his comrade. The white-haired man wondered why he specifically needed to hear what was said in communications.

...

They reached to the communications room and listened to...Terry and Joyce's conversation.

*"It was like...it was trying to break away from the wallpaper," Terry said. "Then...I saw a body try to break away from the wallpaper as well."*

Joyce's gasp was heard. "A...a body?" she asked.

*"Mmm-hmm, but...it didn't look human. It was like...I dunno, but it didn't look human...more like a monster."*

A sigh was then heard. *"Okay, now li-"* Her dog barked in the background, cutting her off.

*"Joyce?"*

*"I'll talk to you later, Terry."* One of the workers stopped it and they all looked at Dr. Brenner, including Dr. Wheeler.

"Well, that's a voice we haven't heard in years," he stated to his comrade.

The white-haired man sighed and crossed his arms. "Teresa..." he muttered under his breath.

"Should we do something about her, Dr. Brenner?" asked one of the workers.

He began thinking about that. Ever since that night, she was never seen again and she kept her promise. She didn't know that the monster she was describing was connected to them, she couldn't possibly know. However, she was always a curious woman, doing her discovering until she gets her answer.

"Martin?" Dr. Wheeler asked him.

He finally reached to a conclusion, saying, "Unless we find out she's doing something about this, we don't interfere with her."

Ted raised an eyebrow. "Are you sure?"

He nodded as a reply. There was a chance that she could discover the monster's connection to the labs, but there was also a chance that she may not find out the connection and fail. She may be a very curious woman, but sometimes, her curiosity kills the cat...

---

With Carl, the two women ate meat stew on trays and watched a soap opera. When an actress delivered her line in an over-the-top way, the two women laughed. "You could have said that without yellin',"

Becky commented to the TV.

Terry nodded. "Yeah, but that was probably her best performance in this whole episode," she added.

"Right." The two laughed again, making Carl feel left out, eating his stew slowly.

The mother looked at the time, her smile immediately dropping. It was 8:03, over the time she was supposed to meet Hopper at the coroner. She muttered, "Shit." She then stood up and placed her stew on the table, getting her purse and about to leave.

Becky looked puzzled at her again. "Terry? Where're you goin'?" she asked her.

She turned to her and gave her a reassuring smile. "I need to go to my night shift," she lied. "It was great doing this with you again though. I feel better enough to go work again."

The woman nodded and smiled back at her. "Alright, Terry. See ya." They both waved bye at each other before the woman exited the house and got into her car immediately. She started the engine and backed out of the driveway, driving away to the coroner to meet Hopper.

---

She finally arrived there, seeing Hopper in his vehicle. She sighed and parked it at one of the parking spots, stopping the engine and getting out of it. Hopper got out of his car too, without his hat. They both approached each other. "Sorry, lost track of time," she said to him. "Why are we here?"

He sighed and whispered to her, "I think Will's body is a fake." She looked shocked. "I'm going to go check it. You're coming with me."

She nodded, but then stated, "It's still open though. I doubt those lights are on for no reason."

He nodded. "Right, but when we get in there, I'll tell Patty that I lost my hat. When she asks you, just tell her that you loaned me some money and some were in it."

Terry scoffed in disbelief, believing that was stupid. "What?"

"Just trust me, okay?" Sighing, she nodded. He nodded back as they both entered into the coroner, seeing the woman at the desk on the phone. He gave her a fake smile as well as Terry. "Hey there, Patty."

She looked at him and said, "Hopper? What are you doing here?"

"I think I forgot my hat here."

"Oh." She then looked at Terry. "And you, m'am?"

The dirty-blond-haired woman exhaled and replied, "I loaned him some money because he needed to buy something and like a complete idiot, he put it under his hat." Hopper was close to laughing for hearing her call him an idiot.

Patty looked a bit skeptical, but nodded and repeated, "Oh."

"We'll just be a minute." She nodded as they both left and she got back on the phone.

As they walked to the room the body was in, they saw a state officer read a book. Hopper kept smiling and said to the officer, "Hey, that's a good damn book, a nasty mutt." The officer instantly closed it and blocked their way into the room.

"You and that lady shouldn't be here," he said to them.

Terry crossed her arms, letting the police chief do the talking. "Yeah, I just got off the line with O'Bannon, says he needs ya at the station for some emergency-"

The officer looked at him in disbelief. "The hell are you talking about? I don't work with O'Bannon."

Hopper looked at him in disbelief. "Oh, did I say O'Bannon? I meant...uh..."

He then looked at Terry. "And what the hell are you doing here? Who are you?"

She was silent, thinking of an answer. "I..." She then thought of something. "I'm a detective from State. I'm with the Chief of Police here to investigate Will Byers's body."

He gave her a skeptical look while Hopper gave her a surprised one. "Can I see your license?"

She nodded and opened her purse, putting her hand in it. "Of course, it's right..." She then balled her fist. "Here." She then got her fist out of the purse and threw him a punch, stunning him for a bit. Hopper finished the job by throwing his punch at his face. He landed on the ground, unconscious. They both looked at each other, the man smiling down at her.

"Wow, didn't think you would do that," he said to her. "Since you were the shy school nerd and all."

She chuckled at him, walking to his body and grabbing the key. "I can be surprising," she replied to him, throwing him the keys and lowering her voice. "Why do you think his body is a fake?" She was curious, since that could be linked to the Lab.

Hopper caught it and began unlocking the door. "Well, someone from State was sent in to dissect his body AND it was found at a place owned by State by a State officer." He then unlocked the door and gestured her to come in, the woman doing so before he entered in and closed it. "Seems pretty suspicious, don't you think?"

She nodded in understanding. She could definitely see the labs being involved in this. "Yup." They then entered into another room where the body fridge was.

They slowly walked into it, leaving the door open. They approached one of the fridges, Hopper opening the top door and Terry opening the bottom one. Her eyes widened at the sight of some of Will's hair, so she tapped him and mouthed, "Hey." He closed the top door and saw the hair Terry pointed at. He nodded as they both pulled out the cot it was on. Hopper slowly removed the blanket off of its face, showing Will's face.

The two of them looked away, Terry walking away and the both of

them rubbing their faces. They couldn't believe they were doing this—they were seeing Will's dead body, of course they would be disgusted by it.

Hopper turned to the woman and said, "You don't need to do this, you know."

She scoffed and turned to him. "Listen, if there is a chance, even a small chance, that Hawkins Lab has something to do with all that's been going on, I'll do anything. I have nothing but contempt for them and I've been speculating that they might have something to do with all this crazy shit going on. Understand?"

He nodded, getting where she was coming from. "Alright." He looked back at the body, removing more of the blanket to show the chest. He let out a deep sigh as he pushed his hand against Will's chest. However, it felt...stiff. He looked a bit puzzled by it.

"What's wrong?" Terry asked, approaching him and the body.

"His body...I pressed against it and it was stiff," Hopper answered.

Terry looked curiously and pushed her hand against his chest too, feeling the stiffness. She felt weird. "Huh, usually, you can press down farther and feel the bones."

He nodded again at her, putting a hand under his chin. "Right..." She then ran her hand over it, looking even more puzzled.

"This is unusually smooth..." She looked at him. "You got a knife on you?" He nodded as he got out his pocket knife and gave it to her. She got out the blade and looked at the body, wondering where to start.

Reading that look on her face, Hopper pointed at the bellybutton and suggested, "Start here, maybe?" She looked at the spot. It seemed like a good area to start, so she nodded at him and placed the tip there. She took a deep breath, not believing that she was actually dissecting a body. The man gave her a tight yet comforting squeeze on her shoulder. "It's alright. Just do it."

Not wasting any more time, she nodded once more and dug the knife



into the body. With his help, she began cutting up from it, up until the upper part of his chest. She pulled the blade away from it and got a good look at it. She placed two of her finger tips on the sides of the blade to feel if there was any liquid on it. Her eyes widened at the discovery that there was nothing. "This is clean..." she muttered.

Shocked, Hopper placed his hand through the cut and felt something soft...but it wasn't mushy-soft. It was just...soft...like a pillow. He grabbed a handful of the soft substance and pulled it out, her and Terry seeing that it was...cotton. Both of their eyes widened. "What the hell?" he murmured under his breath.

She had seen this before. She did, making her scoff again and look at the body, shaking her head. "I can't believe it, they made a wax dummy out of him."

He looked at her with concern. "They did this before or...?"

She nodded at him. "They usually do it when they kidnap kids for their experiments." Both of them looked at each other, horrified of what might have happened to Will.

"You think that...?"

"They took him, took him for an experiment." Both of them were completely terrified, now needing to find him in the labs before it was too late.

---

They left the coroner and drove to the fences that protected the labs. Hopper was following Terry. They both stopped their cars and got out of them, approaching the labs. Hopper had a tool that could chop off the fencing. The two adults looked at each other and nodded, knowing what they needed to do. He then took the blades of the tool and began cutting the wires on the fence.

---

**Done! What do you guys think? How was the original bits? Any typos or mistakes?**

**Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter!**

**\*EDIT of 07/02/19:**

**-Added "meet and" and "well" in "As if her discovery about what they really do to the kids she'd meet and treated well wasn't enough."**

**-Made Becky acknowledge Joyce while pep-talking to Terry**

**-Added "to eight, so she replied," in "It wasn't close" 'cause that was a sentence fragment.**

**-Replaced "communicate" with "still channel"**

**-Removed ", hoping to talk to him."**

**-Removed "sighed again and"**

**-Fixed a typo**

## 12. Terry, How Are You?

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

**\*WARNING: This is a more Terry-centric chapter, just so you know!\***

---

Finally in the lab area, Terry and Hopper hid in the dark while they saw two of the scientists leave out of the building. The woman almost smirked, remembering those two workers. She got it away, however, as she and the chief sneaked into the building without the two scientists noticing them.

Once they entered in, Hopper let Terry lead the way, since he thought she had a better grasp at the building than him. After all, she used to work here. Terry peeked into another hallway, seeing nobody there. She turned to Hopper and gestured him to follow her, the man doing so as they both began walking through it quietly. Suddenly, they heard some indistinct chatter. They both froze, the woman looking at an empty room and quickly dragging him and herself in there. They hid away from the open doorway as the chatter came, then faded by the second. The two looked out to see if the doctors were gone, then went back to the hallway and began walking through it again.

Hopper whispered to Terry, "Any idea where Will might be?"

"I got a few," she answered back in a whisper.

...

Through hiding quietly at times, the two adults looked at some patient rooms used for...well...the subjects of...that experiment. However, they found nothing, stressing out the both of them. Where the hell might Will be?

...

As they walked through yet another hallway, Terry stopped when she

saw flap-doors with the bio-hazard sign on it. Hopper stopped as well as they both got a good look at it. He pointed at it. "There, probably?" he asked quietly.

She sighed. "Well, some of the scientists and subjects go there sometimes," she answered quietly. "No way Will would be there though." Unless it turned out that he was dangerous in some way...but there was no chance of seeing the boy there.

Suddenly, she saw Hopper unzip the flaps and enter through it, surprising her and making her follow. "Hopper, what the hell are you doing?" He didn't answer, making her feel more worried. "Hopper!" she whisper-shouted. She then saw him try to open the door to the bunker, the woman sighing and crossing her arms. "Can't get in without an ID."

The man sighed and turned to her. "You happen to have yours, by any chance?"

She shook her head. "Got confiscated when I quit. No way I can get it back."

All of a sudden, they both heard guns cocking, making the two of them tense up. "That's right, Teresa. Now you and that man, hands up!" one man said from behind her. Her eyes widened as she turned to see an agent and a guard pointing guns at not only her, but also at Hopper. She instantly had her hands up, feeling shocked and scared that they saw them.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!" Hopper exclaimed as he approached the man. "Let's all try be civil here-"

The agent scoffed. "She shouldn't be here. She promised that she wouldn't step foot anywhere around here, alright, bud?" The police chief looked at the woman in a bit of surprised, wondering the story behind that.

"Hey, she's with me now, alright? I mean, Dr. Brenner asked for me specifically, but I got her because I don't know my way around this place." He chuckled a little, still approaching them as they backed away, guns still pointed at him. "I promise ya, she won't do any

harm."

The agent scoffed again in disbelief. "Really?" He then got out his walkie-talkie and spoke into it, "Yeah, I got a suspicious man with Teresa-" In a flash, Hopper gave him a hard punch at the face and knocked him out. He then pinned the guard against the wall and disarmed him, startling Terry a little. He put the guard's gun in his pocket.

*"Come again?"* said the man on the radio.

Hopper saw the ID the man had and snatched it away from him, asking, "Can I borrow this one?" He then went to the ID handler and swiped the card in there, opening the door. He gestured Terry to follow him in, so she did as it closed. God, she never felt so terrified since...this work.

Hopper then shot the handler to lock them inside. She widened her eyes and looked at him. "Hopper!" she exclaimed.

He put his gun back in his other pocket, got out and turned on his flashlight, and replied to her, "Let's go." He then began to leave to find Will. She sighed and followed him. "Will?"

"Do you know what deep shit you got us in?!" she asked him a bit angrily.

He sighed as he looked into a room for the boy. "Listen, I'd be in deep shit already if I went here alone. It's inevitable."

"You could have knocked that other man unconscious."

He sighed once again, thinking that he probably should have done that. "I could've."

She sighed once again, crossing her arms. "Besides, there's a very small chance that Will might be here. Unless he has proven to be super dangerous this early, there is no way in hell that he would be here."

"And I'm taking that chance right now, am I?" She huffed. Was he always like this? A bit difficult and impulsive to work with? Oh well,

at least she was trying to get an answer with him.

He entered into another room, Terry following suit as they both looked around it. Hopper shone his light at the bed in the room, seeing a stuffed animal on it. He then flashed it towards a drawing taped above the bed. It was like a little kid's drawing, having two stick figures, a poorly-drawn table with an animal on it, a hanging light bulb, and a piece of a ceiling. One stick figure had some hair and glasses, labeled as "Dad" in poor writing, another had some hair too but the fill was empty, labeled as "Doctor", and the last one had no hair, was smaller than the other two, and was labelled as "M11". Terry's eyes widened once more as she took a closer look with the photo.

Curious, Hopper asked, "Can ya tell what this is?"

"A room of some kind..." she answered, her eyes fixed on the drawing. She looked at the labels, then the stick figures. The two tall ones, she figured those were the two doctors. She then looked at the smaller one and its label. She gasped and backed away from it.

"What? What's that?"

She recognized the label. M11...the last subject she met before she quit. She shook her head. "Will wouldn't be in here, but..." She pointed at M11 in the picture. "I know that kid..." It was bringing up a painful memory to her. She...she witnessed something awful, heart-wrenching, to be exact. It strengthened her need to quit this goddamn place.

"M11?" he murmured to himself as he looked at the picture closely. "Could he be connected to Will?"

She shrugged. "I don't know." Now this got deeper than they two were expecting this to be.

---

In Jane's basement, Mike, still dressed in his disguise, laid on the couch, resting and looking up at the ceiling. The trio were talking amongst themselves. "Do you guys know what Will was saying there?" the tomboy asked. "It's like home, but...it's dark?"

"And empty..." Lucas added.

"Empty and cold," Dustin also added. "He said 'cold', right?"

The black-haired boy shrugged. "I don't know. The radio kept going in and out."

The curly-haired boy groaned. "Like riddles in the dark..."

Jane stood up from the chair she was sitting in, pacing around and thinking, "Like home...like his house?"

"Maybe Hawkins?" Lucas suggested.

Mike finally thought up of a word to describe where Will was, saying, "Upside down." The kids looked at him, Jane's face lighting up when she realized what he meant.

"Wait, what did he say?"

"Upside down..." the curly-haired girl replied.

"What?"

She approached the game board on the the table and flipped it right-side up, the two boys sitting with her. "When Mike showed us where Will was, he flipped the board upside down, like this." She then flipped it back upside down. "This is dark and empty, right?"

The boys looked puzzled at each other, Lucas asking Dustin, "Do you even know what she's talking about?"

He shook his head. "No," he replied.

She sighed. "Guys, listen to me." The two looked back at her. "When he took us to find Will, he brought us to his house."

"Yeah," Lucas replied. "And he wasn't there."

"But...what if he was and...we couldn't see him somehow? Like he's on the other side?" The two boys thought about that, Lucas being more disbelieving about this. "What if..." She flipped the board right-

side up again. "This is Hawkins..." She flipped it back upside down again. "And this is where Will is? The Upside Down?"

Dustin's eyes widened in realization of what she was saying. "Like the Vale of Shadows..."

"Exactly!"

Lucas still looked confused, not knowing what to believe anymore...

---

The two got out of the room, Terry leading the way as they both called out Will's name. The alarm from the building began ringing faintly. They both were walking fast, looking around and going to the hallway closest to them. "Will?!" Terry called out.

"Will?!" Hopper also called out. They both then approached the elevator, the woman pressing it a few times as they both waited for it to come.

"Come on..." she muttered before turning when she and the man heard some indistinct from not too far. Just when they saw the men, the elevator door opened, cuing for the two to run in there and press a button to the lowest level of the bunker.

The men ran to them, shouting, "Hey! Stop!" Before they could reach them, the elevator door closed and they both began going down to the level they were about to go into.

...

While the two were waiting to get to the floor, Hopper looked down at Terry, who looked really scared, but really brave too. Curious of what was said before they went inside the bunker, the man asked her, "So you promised not to be here again?" She only had a heavy sigh as a reply, the man frowning. "That what you promised Brenner?"

"And..." she began to answer. "That I wouldn't disclose any information about anything that happens in this building. That includes our divorce."



Now he was very curious. "Why?" She looked up at him with a confused look. "Why did you two divorce?" She felt heavy, since to her, that was a touchy subject.

Before she could answer though, the elevator stopped and the door opened, revealing the lowest level and seeing the large particles floating around everywhere. They forgot that they were even having a conversation, going into in the hallway and looking around with the flashlight.

---

Dustin got Jane's D&D manual and began flipping through it until he found the pages the Vale of Shadows was described in. "The Vale of Shadows..." he read out loud. "...is a dimension that is a dark reflection of our world. It is a place of decay...and death."

---

Terry wondered what the hell happened here. "Will?!" both her and Hopper called out.

---

"A plane out of phase and a place for monsters...it is right next to you and you don't even see it." The kids looked at each other with wide eyes, now absolutely horrified of the possibility that Will was in a place like that.

---

Both of the adults began to cough due to the spores in the air, Hopper shouting, "Will?!"

---

"An alternate dimension..." Jane murmured.

"But...how do you get there?" Lucas asked.

"We cast Shadow Walk," Dustin answered.

The black-haired boy gave him a look that told him he was stupid. "I mean in real life."

The curly-haired boy sighed. "We can't shadow walk, but...maybe he can." The kids then looked at Mike, who was looking at them.

"Do you know how we can get there? To the Upside Down?" Jane asked him. He shook his head, worrying her and Dustin and making Lucas scoff.

"Oh my God..." he muttered under his breath. That was great. Now, how will they reach Will now?

---

The two were still coughing as they entered into the room where the hole was. When they turned to see it due to the growling noise, both of their eyes enlarged in both awe and horror. "What the hell...?" Hopper muttered under his breath.

"What is that...?" Terry asked.

"You're asking me?" They both then began to approach it, seeing the center glowing.

"I have never seen *anything* like this before..." She wondered what the hell were they doing since she was gone.

When they were close to it, they stopped. Both decided to place their hands on the webs that covered the middle of the hole. They felt both slimy and rough. Seriously, both of them wondered what the hell was going on.

Suddenly, they heard sudden footsteps towards them, the two quickly turning to the direction they came from. Hopper got out his gun and gave the other to Terry. "You know how to shoot?" he asked her.

She did know how to use a gun, despite not using one for years. "I'll try," she replied as she unlocked the safety and pointed the gun with Hopper. They both looked around, then saw a man in a hazmat suit approach them.

"Hey!" Hopper shouted to him. "HEY!" Suddenly, Terry saw a hand go over his mouth. Another man in a hazmat suit was behind him, injecting his neck with a needle and knocking him out. She gasped, quickly backing away before the first man caught her and disarmed her, grabbing her wrists tightly.

"Hey, let me go!" she yelled at him.

As the other man carried Hopper, he gestured the other man to bring her up back to ground floor. They proceeded to do so. Terry decided not to struggle because it was too late for her to get away. She was caught, she will see him again...and his friend...

...

Now in an isolated room, Terry sat on a chair with her hands tied behind her back. She let out a heavy sigh and looked into the camera in the room. She knew the risk and she took it. Now, she wondered if that was a good idea.

...

Both Dr. Brenner and Dr. Wheeler watched her from the camera, both frowning. "Speak of the devil," the man with the glasses said to his fellow doctor. "What should we do with her, Martin?"

He knew this was coming, he knew she would break the promise they made all those years ago. "I'll speak to her," he answered.

"You need me?"

He shook his head. "Not necessary." He then exited the room to talk to Terry, Ted looking at him with a worried expression. He wondered what he will talk to her about...

...

The door opened and the woman looked to see her ex-husband himself, Martin Brenner. She felt more heavy than before. That was him, after so many years...she sees him again. "Terry," he greeted as he closed the door and sat across from her. She didn't greet him back since she had a large distaste from him, but he didn't mind that. "How are you?" She didn't answer again, looking at him scornfully. He let out a sigh, knowing she would act like this.

He laced his hands together on the table and continued, "I see that you were with that police officer. He has been a bit of a nuisance lately, poking his nose where it doesn't belong. Just like you." She furrowed her brows down, looking at him angrily. "Why were you with him? What were you two doing here?" She didn't answer once

again, thinking that he probably knew the answer. Getting impatient, he shifted himself and said, "Come on, Terry. I need to know what makes you so eager to come back here, despite our promise."

She knew what kind of power he had and she knew what he would do if she stayed silent for any longer. She finally answered, "Will. Will Byers."

He nodded. "You two were looking for him?"

"Where is he?" The man didn't answer, making her feel more angry. "Tell me, Martin."

"We do not know where he is. We do not have him. He's dead."

"Then why was his body a fake?" His expression turned into one of disdain, feeling a bit surprised that she knew.

"How do you know that?" he asked her in a now cold tone.

"Hopper and I went to the morgue and dissected the body. Usually, you and Ted wouldn't use wax dummies unless you guys kidnapped someone." She paused, seeing the look of disdain on his face. "Now where is he? Is he down there, in that...what was that? Is he there? With...whatever the hell that was?"

Dr. Brenner exhaled deeply. Now that she saw that, there was no way for him to let her go so easily. She should have known the consequences of breaking the promise to pursue her curiosity. Now...now...

He began to think of a solution to this, him smirking. She felt her stomach flop at that look. "Perhaps he is," he replied to her, making her gasp a little and widen her eyes again. "But we didn't kidnap him."

She looked at him angrily again. "Don't lie to me."

"I'm not. He is just a normal boy that suddenly steered into our little problem, which you and that police officer saw down there." She looked at him in shock again. "We don't know how he got in there. We checked our security cameras and hadn't seen him. But he got

records of his voice in that very hole. We were trying to get him out, but we have not succeeded. We're continuing to try and I was thinking..."

She knew where he was getting to, so she filled in the blanks. "I should go in there and find him?"

He nodded. "Correct."

She let out a sigh. "Might as well kill me now. I don't know what's in there, but I don't trust it, just like how I don't trust you."

His smirk dropping, he gave her a bit of a scornful look. "Terry, what is Will to you?" She raised an eyebrow in confusion. "Why break the promise to go find him?"

She huffed, not wanting to answer him, but doing so anyway. "He's...my friend's son...and my daughter's friend."

His smirk came back. "I'm going to guess Joyce and Jane?" She nodded reluctantly, the man sighing. "No wonder. You really do care about those close to you."

She felt goosebumps rising from her skin a little, fearing about what he might be implying. "I swear, if you do anything to my friends and family-"

"I will not. It would be a waste of my time." He paused for a bit, seeing his ex-wife ease a little. "What I'm trying to get at, Terry, is that if you care about them so much to go find that boy, why not finish the job? You were always the type to want to do that, correct?"

The woman looked down at the table in thought. He...he was right. She started now and she wanted to finish, with or without Hopper's help, the poor bastard. For a few seconds, she wondered what they would do with him. Maybe once, just this once, maybe she'll trust Martin. She still held much contempt and disbelief towards him, but if he was willing to help her find Will and bring him back...

She'll take it.

...

In a different room, Terry was uncuffed and on the phone with Becky, practically lying to her about being gone. From afar, Dr. Brenner and Dr. Wheeler watched her. "I'm taking extra hours with this shift," she stated. "I need a little more of that money, you know?"

*"You sure you wanna do that?"* Becky asked her. *"I mean, we did settle down to relieve some of the stress we both had, but extra hours? It might bring it right back."*

She sighed, knowing how her sister must be feeling. "I know you're worried, but I'll be fine. I think it'll be worth it. A little extra money doesn't hurt anybody."

She heard her sister sigh on the phone. *"I'll tell the girls that you'll be gone. When will you be back?"*

"In the morning," she lied, knowing that time wasn't possible to come back.

*"Alright. See ya then, sis."*

"Bye, Becky." She then hung up and turned to the two doctors. "Let's go. We're wasting time." She then walked past the two, Dr. Wheeler shooting a concerned look at his comrade. He gave him a look that told him to stick with it for now, so he and the other doctor began following her down to the bunker.

...

Dressed in a hazmat suit and armed with the gun the staff gave back to her, Terry approached the mysterious hole on the wall, feeling very anxious about what's on the other side. She looked at the two doctors, who gave her a nod of approval to cross it. She then looked at the contraption of rope. The doctors had told her it was jammed...how convenient, so she had to go in there without help. If it was to save Will, she'll deal with it.

She faced the hole again and took a deep breath, trying to keep herself calm. It would cause more problems for her if she went in there completely scared. She was anxious about what she will see inside of it, but she needed to keep a level head if she was ever to get

back alive.

Slowly and surely, she walked into the hole, getting through the goo and into the cold, dark abyss that was behind it all.

As they saw her go inside the hole, Dr. Wheeler asked Dr. Brenner, "Do you think she'll really find him?"

"No," he instantly answered. "This is just removing one problem." The other doctor smiled at him, thinking that practically trapping his ex-wife into a dangerous and unknown place was pretty clever.

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**Stopping here. What do you guys think of this chapter? How did I do with Terry's scene with Brenner? Any typos or mistakes?**

Now, before I do, I must say something. In case you guys didn't visit my profile page, I live in the United States. I'm sure it's been heard around the world that the FCC might repeal net neutrality here in a few days. I did all I can about this, but...I don't know. I'm scared, honestly. I don't know what's going to happen. Maybe my updates will be slower or I might not even be able to come here at all. I sorta, kinda hope that maybe there might be little changes and I can still access here, but that's just my hope. I don't know what the hell is really going to happen.

That's why after publishing this chapter, I'll be working on the next chapters pertaining to this episode and publishing them Monday and Tuesday. If I'm lucky, I'll even work on the chapters to the next episode and publish them until the 14th. I don't know though. They may be longer than usual, so I hope you guys don't mind that.

Now, with that aside, keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter. :)

**\*EDIT of 07/31/19:**

-Replaced the comma with "...but" in "Unless it turned out that he was dangerous in some way... but there was no chance of seeing the boy there."

- Replaced "heard of a few days" with "met"
- Removed "Before that night..." and added "It strengthened her need to quit this goddamn place...a lot."
- Moved Dustin talking about The Vale of Shadows after Hopper and Terry exit the elevator
- Replaced "shrugged" with "didn't answer"
- Removed "she replied."
- Replaced "stirred" with "steered", "don't you agree?" with "correct?", and "ridding of" with "removing"



## 13. That Should Lead Us to the Gate

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

**\*Guess I should answer what net neutrality is for those who don't know. It's the principle that the internet should be very open and available without a company controlling with what you will and will not go to. Repealing that would mean the latter would happen instead. Hope that clears things up for you guys!\***

---

The next morning in the Ives house, since Terry hasn't come back yet, Becky decided to dress the girls up for the funeral of 'Will' herself as well as do their hair. When she was done, she placed in front of a mirror to have them see themselves. Since this was one of those rare occasions where Jane looked feminine, her hair was combed, a part of her curls serving as a left bang and the rest as the bottom of her hair. Kali had her hair in two low ponytails. Both wore long-sleeved black dresses from their closets and black flats. Becky herself also wore a similar black dress and had her hair in a messy midway bun.

She smiled at the both of them, patting their shoulders. "You girls look nice," she said to them. "Anything else you two might need?"

Both of them shook their heads. "No, Auntie," Jane answered.

"No, Aunt Becky," Kali also answered. Both of their minds were racing with different thoughts. Their only similarity was that they both didn't care much for his funeral.

---

Soon, they and Carl went to 'Will's' funeral. Joyce, Jonathan, Lucas and his parents, and Dustin and his mom were there as well. A pastor was saying something from the Bible as they all looked at his casket. All of them looked solemn, even the kids.

Dustin did lose that look, however, when he saw something, grinning instead. He nudged his friends and made them look at what he was looking. A girl with blonde hair and green eyes was crying and

sniffing. The two lost their solemn faces when they saw that. "Just wait until we tell Will that Jennifer Hayes was crying at his funeral," he whispered to them. They began to grin with him, but Becky shushed him, their serious faces back on again.

...

As everyone threw white and yellow roses at 'Will's' lowered casket and began to leave, Becky and Carl decided to meet up with Lonnie, Joyce's ex-husband. "Hey," she greeted the man. "I'm Becky Ives, Terry's sister, and this is my husband, Carl. I'm so sorry 'bout this." She then gave him a hug, in which he returned.

"Thank you for coming," he said to her. When the hug was released, Carl shook his hand.

"If you need us for anything, we'll be here for the next few days," he stated to him.

"I appreciate it. Thank you very much." Before they left, Becky gently squeezed a distressed Joyce's shoulder to comfort her. Though it did ease her a little, she still couldn't believe she was here. There was that incident yesterday with Will...

---

Hopper suddenly woke up in his trailer home, seeing that he was, in fact, there instead of the bunker. He began freaking out and thinking that they might have something either in him or around his home, so he felt his neck, feeling nothing there, before rummaging through his own home to try and find a device they might have stashed it in. He finally found it in his ceiling light, being absolutely appalled by this. The labs were probably going to monitor him so that he won't get into their business again. Well, he wouldn't let them.

He thought about Terry, wondering what might have happened to her last night. Since he disassembled his phone, he couldn't call her-why would he? He didn't even know her number. It looked like he'll have to pay a visit to the Ives home to see if she was there...if not...then the labs...

Damn it.

He went to his room to change into his police uniform. After he did change, he got out after getting his hat from the coat rack he had and walked to his car. He got inside and started the engine, driving out to the Ives household.

---

Terry, now out of what looked like the Hawkins Lab building, continued looking around. Everything was so dark and all those spores were flying everywhere. Dark moss and slimy webs were also around the place too. She thought of what the hell this place was. It looked like Hawkins, yet it wasn't at the same time. She didn't know. Will was in here? Where could he be in a place like this?

She suddenly heard growling, making her whip to the direction it came from and shining the flashlight she had and aiming her gun there. She saw nothing, but heard the growl again. Goosebumps began rising from her skin. What the hell was growling?

She didn't trust the growling as it got louder and a shadow appeared and loomed closer. Wanting to live, she ran as fast as she could away from it. It sounded like it was very dangerous and she, at the moment, didn't want to deal with it. She just needed to find Will and if she was lucky, Barbara, and bring them back to Hawkins. She hoped to God she would find them alive...

---

In the communications room in the labs, the two head doctors listened to the kids trying to communicate with Will. Dr. Brenner didn't recognize Jane's voice since he last saw her when she was two and quiet to him.

Both of the doctors took off their headphones almost at the same time, the white-haired man stating, "He was there."

"There is no doubt about it," added the man in the glasses.

---

Back at the graveyard, Kali and Jonathan met up with each other and sat together somewhere secluded and away from the majority of people. The auburn-haired guy had a map he had. "So this is where we know for sure it's been," he said to her.

She nodded as she pointed at a certain marked spot. "Steve's house, right?" she replied.

He nodded back at her as he pointed at another marked spot. "And that's the part of the woods where they found Will's bike..." He then pointed at another marked spot. "And that's my house."

"It's all so close..."

"Right. It's all within in a mile or something. Whatever this thing is, it doesn't...doesn't travel far."

They both looked at each other for a moment, then Kali said, "We need to get out there."

Jonathan sighed. "We may not find anything."

"But I found something. If we do see it, then what should we do?" There was silence for a moment, Kali wondering what this guy might be thinking.

He looked back at her and answered, "We kill it."

...

They then went to his father's car, Jonathan entering through the passenger's side and opening the storage compartment with a knife. Kali watched him unlock it and took out a...gun. Her eyes widened at the sight of it as he locked in the barrel and put on the safety, getting out a box of ammo next. She couldn't believe he had his hands on a real gun and real ammo. "You have to be kidding me," she muttered.

He scoffed. "What? Should we find this thing and take another photo?" he replied sarcastically. "Maybe yell at it?"

Now it was her turn to scoff. "Hide that shit somehow."

"What do you think I'm trying to do?" He then put the pack of ammo inside of his inner formal coat pocket, then got up and out of the car to put the gun in his back pocket, covering it with the bottom of his formal coat. "This is the best we've got, Kali."

The teenage girl sighed in stress. "I know, but..."

"Listen, you can tell somebody, but they won't believe you."

She turned to him with a serious face. "And your mum?"

He looked at her in disapproval. "She's had enough."

"She deserves to know-"

"And I'll tell her when this thing is dead, alright?" She didn't reply to that, sighing again. Since she was missing her kid and acting frantic and all (it showed when she called her), maybe the news of that thing being around would amplify those problems...

...

Everyone was in a building, eating food and drinking refreshments. Becky and Carl were speaking to the trio's parents, including Lonnie and excluding Joyce, about this while the kids saw their favorite teacher picking out some food. They all decided to approach him, Jane saying, "Mr. Clarke." The man turned to the kids and smiled at them.

"Hi there," he greeted them in a mix of a serious yet reassuring tone. "How are you kids holding up?"

Jane and Lucas looked at each other before looking back at him. Dustin took a Nilla Wafer and ate it as the black-haired boy answered, "We're in...mourning."

"Jeez, these aren't real Nilla Wafers," Dustin randomly commented, his two friends looking at him in disapproval. Mr. Clarke did look a bit concerned at him.

The two kids looked back at their teacher, the tomboy asking, "If you don't mind, can you answer some of our questions?"

Lucas nodded to confirm it. "Yeah, we definitely have some questions," he added.

"A lot of questions." The teacher wondered what they wanted to ask

him in a time like this.

...

They all sat down at a table together, Jane asking, "So, in 'Cosmos', Carl Sagan talked about other dimensions, right? Like, beyond our world?"

Mr. Clarke nodded. "Theoretically speaking, yes," he answered.

She nodded. "Right, theoretically..."

"So, theoretically, how exactly do we travel there?" Lucas asked.

The teacher thought they might have thought of something, so he questioned, "Have you guys been thinking about Hugh-Everett's 'Many-Worlds Interpretation'?" The kids all looked at each other with puzzled looks, wondering why he brought that up. "There are parallel universes, basically. They are just like our world, but they come in infinite variations. There can be a world out there where none of this tragic stuff even happened."

"Actually, that's not what we're talking about," Lucas replied, making the man a bit surprised.

"Oh?"

"We were thinking more of an evil dimension, like the Vale of Shadows," Dustin stated.

"You know the Vale of Shadows, right?" Jane asked the man.

He nodded. "Yeah, an echo of the Material Plane, where necrotic and shadow magic-"

All the kids nodded at him. "Yeah, that's it," the girl cut him off, the man looking at her. "If a place like the Vale of Shadows did exist, how would we be able to travel there?"

"Theoretically speaking..." the black-haired boy added.

"Well..." the man began as he took out an extra plate under his own

and got out a pen to draw with. He faced the plate to the kids and drew a rope before drawing a person. "Picture an acrobat...standing on a tight rope. The tightrope is our dimension and our dimension has rules." He then drew a left and right arrow. "We can move forwards or backwards. But...what if next to the acrobat..." He next drew a small bug. "...is a flea?" He drew smaller left and right arrows next to that. "Like the acrobat, the flea can go forwards or backwards, right?" The kids nodded at him. "Now here's where things get interesting." He drew arrows on the rope. "The flea can also travel on the side of the rope and even..." He finally created an arrow next to the flea put down under the rope. "...underneath the rope."

The kids looked at each other again, looking awed and murmuring amongst each other, "The Upside Down..."

Mr. Clarke nodded once again. "Right."

The curly-haired girl looked at him again. "But we're not the flea, just the acrobat, right?" she asked him.

"In this metaphor, yes."

"So we can't go upside down?" Lucas asked.

He shook his head. "No."

"Well, is there any way for the acrobat to turn upside down?" asked Dustin.

The man began to think about that for a few seconds, then answered, "Well, for that to happen, you need to create a massive amount of energy, more than humans are capable of creating, mind you, to create a tear of time and space. And then..." He folded the plate in half, hamburger-style, and poked a hole through it, startling the kids a little. "You create a doorway."

"Like a gate?"

"Sure, like a gate. But again, this is all-"

"Theoretical," Lucas said, finishing his sentence.

"But...what if this gate already existed?" Jane asked the teacher.

"Well, if it did, we would know," Mr. Clarke answered. "It would disrupt gravity, the magnetic field, our environment. It can even swallow us up whole." The kids looked a bit scared at the sound of that. "Science is neat, but not very forgiving, I'm afraid." Now the three began to think about what he said. If Will was in a place like what Mr. Clarke described as...

---

She stopped running, now entering through the downtown of Hawkins. This was extremely odd. This place was so dark and disgusting, but it was like Hawkins. Really, what IS this place?

"Will?!" she called out a few times, walking through the road. "Barbara?!" There was no luck. She didn't hear anything, not a sound or a voice, not even a breath. She sighed heavily. She just knew that Brenner set her up. It was always like him to set people up. Maybe he wasn't lying and that Will was really in this place, but maybe he just wanted to get rid of her that way.

That goddamn son of a bitch.

...

She made it out of downtown and found herself on a dirt road. She did recognize it. She took this road whenever she went to Joyce's house. Maybe that's where Will was. It was his home. She ran across the road to get to the home.

---

Back at the home, the kids were in the basement with Mike again, Jane showing the freckled boy what Mr. Clarke showed her and the boys. She poked a hole through a piece of paper, making his eyes widen for a bit. "It takes a lot of energy to build a gate like this," she said to him. "But that's gotta be what happened. Otherwise, how did Will get there, right?"

He nodded at her. "Right..." he replied to her.

Lucas, who was sitting across from them, asked the dark-haired boy,



"We just wanna know, Mike. Do you know where the gate is?" He looked at him, shaking his head. He looked completely disbelieved. "Then how did you know about the Upside Down?!" He didn't answer, looking down at his hands as he began to played with them for a bit. Lucas looked at Jane, who shrugged and was just as puzzled as he was. Now what?

Dustin was holding a compass and pacing around with it. Mike looked at him, making the other two also look at him. "Dustin, what are you doing?" the tomboy asked. He didn't answer her and continued pacing around.

"Dustin!" Lucas yelled at him, making him stop and look at the three others.

"I need to see your compasses," he asked of them, making them feel more puzzled. "All of them, all of your compasses, right now!" His voice sounded like as if there was something urgent. Jane and Lucas looked at each other, still having their puzzled faces.

...

On the table, the three kids set their compasses on there. The curly-haired boy bunched them all together. "What's going on?" Jane asked him.

"You see that they're all facing north?" he asked both her and Lucas.

"Yeah, and...?" Lucas replied, shrugging.

"That's not true north."

His friends raised an eyebrow at him. "What does that mean?" the girl questioned.

"Exactly what I said, that's not true north." He looked at the two confused kids in disbelief. "Are you two seriously this dense?" They both shrugged at him, making him groan and point left. "The sun rises at the east..." He then pointed at the right. "And it sets in the west. That means..." He finally pointed near to the right. "That's true north."

"So, the compasses are broken or something?" asked a confused Jane.

The boy let out a heavy sigh. "Do you even know how a compass works?" He put one of the compasses up to her eye level. "Do you see a battery pack on this?" She shook her head as a reply. "Right, 'cause it doesn't need one." He then put it down and went on, "The needles are naturally drawn to the Earth's magnetic North Pole."

"So why are they broken?" Lucas questioned.

"That's what I couldn't figure out, but then I remembered something: you can change a direction of a compass with a magnet. If there's a presence of a more powerful magnetic field, the needle deflects to that power." Now the two kids began to understand. "Then I remembered what Mr. Clarke said, the gate would have so much power..."

"That it would disrupt the magnetic field," Jane finished for him.

He smiled and nodded at her. "Exactly!"

"So that means if we follow the compasses' north..." Lucas began.

"That should lead us to the gate." Now they know what Dustin was talking about. It seemed like a good idea and they were willing to follow it.

Mike, who was looking at them from the couch, felt very worried about this, however. He knew what and where the gate was, but...it was dangerous...

...

Upstairs, Becky got out of her sister's room in new clothes and walked downstairs. She had on a warm-colored flannel and navy-blue jeans. Suddenly, she heard the doorbell ring, making her a little startled by the sound. She announced, "I'll get it!" She then walked to the door and opened it up, revealing...Hopper. She looked very concerned about him being there.

He narrowed his eyes at her and questioned, "Becky?"

Now she realized who he was. "Jimmy," she greeted him. "Police chief, aren't ya?"

He nodded. "Thought you were in Indianapolis."

"My husband and I are just visitin' for the week." He nodded again as Carl approached the door with wide eyes.

"Uh, hello, officer," he greeted him.

"Hey," he greeted back before letting out a sigh and asking Becky, "Is your sister here?"

She immediately shook her head. "No, actually."

He raised an eyebrow. "Why not?"

"She called me last night and said she was workin' extra hours on her night shift and that she'll be back by this morning." She shook her head and sighed. "Still isn't here yet. Even missed the funeral."

Carl shrugged. "Yeah, maybe her night work is far, so we're still waiting," he added.

"Or she went back to her morning and afternoon job as a waitress, but we really don't know."

He nodded at the two of them, mentally cursing himself and saying, "Thank you both for your time."

However, as he began to leave, Becky asked, "Wait! What do ya need Terry for?" He stopped for a few seconds, wondering if he should answer her or not. He decided not to and get into his car. "Hey! Jimmy!" He started it and began to drive away from the house.

He finally drove away, thinking that Terry was in some deep shit right now. After all, she formerly worked for them and promised them not to be anywhere in its vicinity...

Meanwhile, Becky sighed and shut the door, Carl asking, "What did he want with your sister?"

She shrugged, feeling absolutely puzzled. "I dunno," she replied before getting her purse from her coat rack. She got out her pack of cigarettes, but her husband snatched it from her, shocking her a bit. "Hey!"

"You smoked enough for the past few days, Rebecca. I don't want you to get sick from this or anything." She gave him a look of disapproval and crossed her arms, making him sigh. "Listen, I get that you're on edge after what's happened here since he came here, but these aren't going to help."

"Then what will?" she asked him bitterly.

"I will." She sighed as he put the pack in his pocket and held her hands. "Rebecca, I love you. I'm doing this because I care for you. You're my wife. I vowed to protect you until the end of my days. I don't want you getting sick or even hurting yourself in any way because of all of this going on. Tobacco shouldn't be your coping mechanism." She sighed again, feeling a bit guilty. He gave her a look of reassurance. "You keep saying to your sister and the girls that they should talk to you and calm down. Now, I'm asking the same. Can you do the same for me, Becky?"

The woman looked away from him, releasing a long sigh. He wasn't wrong, she was on edge. She did try to cope by smoking and having her bonding moment with her sister the night before, but she guessed those didn't work to her favor. And she did realize that her irritation was causing her to argue with him more. Maybe once, just this once, she'll listen to him.

She gave him a nod. "Alright, honey," she replied to her, making him smile. He then hugged her, surprising her. He hadn't done that in a long time. Smiling back though, she hugged him back, feeling better since he did that.

...

In the garage, Kali came out, her hair now in a braid. She wore a purple coat with white puffs inside the hood, a grey shirt, dark-blue skinny jeans, and a pair of black sneakers. She saw a baseball in the garage and took it. It was there because when Jane was younger, she

liked baseball and sometimes played it with the boys. She decided to give herself some space and start swinging it. She thought her first swing was a bit off, so she tried again. Still thought it was off, so she swung a third time.

That time, she almost hit...Steve Harrington, surprising her. He swooped back, dodging the swing. "Whoa there!" he exclaimed. Her eyes were as wide as saucers from the sight of him.

She put the bat to her side and asked, "What are you doing here, Steve?"

"What are YOU doing with THAT?" he asked back, pointing at the bat.

She quickly thought up of a lie. "Just...thinking of joining softball."

He nodded and sighed in relief. "Good, 'cause I thought that was for me." She looked at him concernedly, making him get to the point. "Look, I wanted to say that I'm sorry. Even before you threatened me with that baseball bat." She raised an eyebrow at him, the jock leaning against Carl's car. "Listen, I panicked and acted like a total dick-"

"Right," she said, cutting him off and having him sigh. "Did you get in trouble with your parents?"

"I mean, yeah, but..." He shrugged. "Who cares, really? Screw 'em." He then looked at her sincerely. "Any news about Barbara? Parents heard from her or..."

Letting out a heavy sigh, she shook her head. "No." She still got nothing yet. There was the photo, but she didn't want to tell him about it. He didn't have any place in her and Jonathan's investigation. "Nothing."

There was half a minute of awkward silence between them. Steve broke it by saying, "Hey, Kal." He stopped leaning against the car and approached her. "Why don't we go catch a movie tonight? Just pretend that everything's normal for a few hours." She didn't know about doing that. "All the Right Moves' is still playing." He began to

grin. "You know, with that lover boy from Risky Business?"

Now she grinned and chuckled with him. "I know, I know..." she replied.

"Carol says I kinda look like him." She gave him a playful yet skeptical look. "What do ya think?" He then took her back and began singing the lyrics to "Old Time Rock and Roll".

She giggled at him doing that, but dropped her smile and answered, "I just can't, Steve. I'm sorry." His smile began to drop as well. "I mean, I've been getting busy with this whole funeral thing and my sister...she's taking it pretty hard, you know?"

He nodded. "Uh, sure, yeah, yeah."

"So..."

"I should go?"

She nodded at him. "I'm so sorry. I'll call you later, alright?" He nodded as he gave her bat back and a quick kiss on the lips.

"Yeah, I'd like that," he answered as he began to leave. Before he did though, he turned back to her and pointed at the car. "This your mom's?"

She shook her head. "Oh, no. It's my uncle's. He and my aunt are visiting for the week. He has a good job and all, so..."

"Ah." He nodded in understanding. "Gotcha." He then left, humming "Old Time Rock and Roll". She sighed. He was a good guy, for the most part, but he had to stay out of this. For his own good, to say the least.

After he disappeared from her sight, she positioned herself with the bat again and practiced her swings once more.

---

Terry finally arrived at the Byers home, approaching it. She suddenly heard some muffled yelling. She cautiously went to the door, the yelling sort of becoming clearer. She entered inside and saw...no one.

She was absolutely baffled. She saw no one, yet she could hearing yelling. What sort of...

*"Jesus, Joyce! It was his funeral today!"* shouted...Lonnie. *"Do we have to do this right now?!"* Now she was puzzled. When the hell did HE come back?

*"I can't believe I fell for this...!"* Joyce whimpered frantically. Terry decided to stop where she was to listen to them.

*"Joyce, I'm just here to help-"*

*"To help?!"*

*"We could use that money for good!"* The woman rolled her eyes. There was a reason Joyce separated from him...

*"Oh, I-like, uh, um, paying off your debts?!"*

*"To pay for Jonathan to go to school!"*

*"Oh, don't do that..."*

*"What?"*

*"LIE to me!"*

*"I'm NOT lying, Joyce!"*

Terry shook her head and sighed. She thought that maybe he came back to "comfort" her. Well, that didn't work, as she was listening to.

She suddenly noticed the painted letters on the wall. Each coordinated with a light on a string of Christmas lights. She approached it slowly, carefully looking at them. Why did Joyce do this? Was it to...

Communicate with Will?

How though? It didn't make much sense to her.

*"What's with these goddamn lights?"* Lonnie asked. Terry looked up at the ceiling, seeing none of them on. She felt like she would get a

migraine if she tries to figure out what the hell was going on. She couldn't help it though, damn it.

---

Inside the home, both of them saw the lights flickering randomly, all of them, including the Christmas lights. Joyce's eyes widened, thinking that...maybe Will was there again.

---

*"You see, Joyce? You need me here."*

*"Oh, ho, ho! I did NOT need you for a LONG time!"*

*"Oh really? Look what happened."* Even though she couldn't see the argument, Terry felt a spike of anger rushing through her body. How the hell could he say that at a time like this? He was scummy in the past, but that? That had to be the most scummiest.

*"Oh, don't you dare! I was HERE, at the very least!"*

*"Come on, Joyce. Look around this place. All these Christmas lights, that hole you in the wall. What do you think I wanted to tell you? That you're a great mom?! No! You're a mess!"*

*"You know what?! Maybe I am a mess, maybe I'm going crazy, maybe I'm outta my mind! But I will keep these lights up until the day I die until there's a chance that Will is still out there, GODDAMN IT!"* Terry felt her heart drop hearing Joyce like this. God, Lonnie just brings the worst of her out... *"Now, get OUT! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!"*

After that, it was all silence, roaming around for a couple of minutes. Terry sighed and sat on the couch. She felt stressed and she felt tired. God, how long was she here? What the hell was going on? Where the hell was she and where the hell was Will? She had more questions than answers now, and she hated it.

She groaned and leaned her head against the 'T' on the wall. She suddenly heard Joyce gasp, making her look at the direction it came from. She could still hear her...

*"W-Will...?"* she asked, almost sounding like she was going to sob. *"A-are you there, baby?"* Her eyes widened. What the hell was she talking



about? *"Will, please...get out of that T."* She gasped and stood up, now realizing something.

Joyce was communicating with Will...like this. That explains the wall and the lights...

"Oh my God..." she muttered under her breath.

---

Kali arrived at a part of the woods Jonathan told her to go to with her purse. She saw him shooting at bottles, though he wasn't hitting one. At all. She smirked and shouted out, "Aren't you supposed to hit the cans?"

He smirked back at her and answered sarcastically, "Actually, I'm trying to hit the space between the cans." She scoffed and put her purse down on the grass. "You ever shot a gun before?"

She raised an eyebrow at him. "Have you met my mum?"

He chuckled at her as he reloaded his gun. "Yeah, I haven't shot since I was ten. My dad took me hunting on my birthday."

The black-haired girl scoffed again. "Great present, I suppose."

He chuckled again. "Yeah, and the best part? He made me kill a rabbit."

She looked at him in disbelief. "A rabbit?"

"Yeah. He thought it would make me more of a man or something."

"I'm going to guess that backfired."

"Yup, I cried for a week after that."

She chuckled a bit nervously, muttering, "Christ..."

He looked at her with a weird look. "What? I'm a big fan of Thumper."

She began giggling for bit before stopping. "I meant your father."

"Yeah...he's an asshole." He then sighed. "I guessed he and my mom loved each other at some point, but I wasn't around for that part."

She nodded at him, understanding exactly what that meant. "Same here. When my mum and dad brought me into their family, I didn't see them be happy together. They'd either ignore each other's existence or argue." She gestured him to give her the gun, in which he did with a nod.

He frowned at that statement. "Damn."

She then released the safety. "My mum always took care of me though. She was loving and was always there for me. My dad, not so much, probably because of work."

He nodded in understanding. "Right. Isn't it just your mom now?"

She nodded. "Mmm-hmm. My mum and dad separated when I was five or six."

"Must've been hard on you."

She nodded again, frowning at the memories bestowed to her. "Yeah, I thought for the longest time that maybe I was the reason why they separated, but it wasn't. My dad's just an asshole."

"How, if you don't mind me asking?"

She sighed, now speaking her mind and memory. Oh God, that memory. She aimed at one of the cans. "A couple days before they decided to divorce, my dad brought me and Jane to this...facility of some sort. I guess it was his workplace or something." Jonathan nodded once again. "He took us both to this room, gave us...something to swallow...like pills..."

He looked shocked at that statement. "What?!"

She scoffed. "I know, it's crazy for him to give a couple of kids some pills to swallow."

"What parent does that?"

She shrugged. "My father, apparently."

He sighed and shoved his hands into his pockets. "Then what?"

She sighed again. "And then we put these these sort of...headgears on our heads. He and this other guy told us to try and move these blocks..." She paused to scoff again and look at him. "Get this, they wanted us to try and move the blocks with our minds."

The auburn-haired guy began to laugh. "What?" he asked, thinking she was joking.

She shrugged again and looked back at the can. "It's true, believe me! I was a dumb kid, so I thought I'd try. Jane was super young, like two or something, so she tried doing what I did since she didn't understand what they said. He kept pressuring us, not in a yelling manner, but I remember him pressuring us in a cold voice. Then...then we heard my mum banging the door and yelling at him through it. She was dragged away, but I was getting scared, especially when I saw that my dad was looking at her like he didn't give a shit. He just...watched his wife, me and Jane's mum, being dragged away while she was yelling at him."

His grin disappeared when she said that. "Jesus Christ..." He paused. "Do you know why...he did what he did?"

She shrugged once more. "I only remember removing the headgear from my head and Jane's, then the other guy whispering to him, "They're incapable."

"Incapable of what?"

She shrugged and scoffed again. "I don't know. Mind powers? If those even exist." Both of them nervously chuckled before turning serious. "The next couple days, after some more arguing, they decided to get away from each other. A couple weeks later, divorce."

"Couple weeks?"

"I know, pretty fast. I never knew why, but at least the arguing was over and my mum was more happy than she ever was with him. She used to work with him, so she quit that job and took two different

ones to care for me and Jane. That was our family ever since."

Jonathan exhaled, processing that entire story. Compared to his, she had it worse. "Wow."

"Yeah..." She shut one eye and had her finger on the trigger. "Wow." She then pulled it and shot the gun. It hit the can, knocking it out of the cut tree it was on. Both of them looked surprised and happy, looking at each other and smiling. They were not only surprised that she actually shot the can, but that they are pretty similar in a way. Both had single mothers, both went through their parents divorcing, both didn't like their fathers...

They were going to get along just fine.

---

**Stopping here. What do you guys think of this chapter? How did I handle the changes? Any typos or mistakes?**

**Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter!  
:D**

**\*EDITS of 09/02/19:**

**-Replaced "ya" with "you"**

**-Removed ellipses in "Their only similarity was that they both didn't care much for his funeral."**

**-Fixed a typo**

**-Made Jennifer's eyes green 'cause they are**

**-Had Terry actively look for Barbara as well as Will**

**-Removed "Really though, they couldn't wait until they tell Will that."**

**-Added "Joyce's ex-husband."**

**-Added "It looked like Hawkins, yet it wasn't at the same time."**

**-Swapped dialogues for Brenner and Ted**

**-Replaced "him" with "the man"**

**-Removed "cutting him off and"**

**-Added "and where" in "He knew what and where the gate was, but...it was dangerous..."**

**-Described Becky's new clothes**

**-Replaced "...some days" with "the week."**

**-Removed "she answered."**

**-Added "for" in "You smoked enough for the past few days, Rebecca."**

**-Replaced "nonstop" with "randomly"**

**-Changed the backstory a little to make it more logical**

## 14. It's Dangerous

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Terry looked at the letters again. Since Joyce could see that she touched that, maybe she can communicate with her this way...

---

Joyce was still in the living room, desperate for her son to answer. "Will?" she asked. "Will, please, talk to me, baby..." She suddenly saw the light flash over 'I', making her gasp and try to decipher it. "I..." Two lights came afterwards over 'A' and 'M'. "Am..." Three lights lit above 'N', 'O', and 'T'. "Not..." Finally, three lights over 'W', 'T', and 'L' two times. "Will...?" She looked confused, now stringing those together in a sentence. "I am not Will?" She then yelled, "Then who are you?! What the hell are you doing in my house?!"

After a minute, she saw a light flicker on the 'T', so she read aloud, "T..." Another light over the 'E'. "E..." The light above the 'R' flickered two times. "R...R..." Finally, the second-to-last light flickered above the 'Y'. Her eyes were as large as plates when she realized what that spelled out to be. "Terry?!" She put her hands on her temples. Now this was getting more and more mind-boggling. Now her friend is communicating with her this way?!

The lights continued to flicker over letters and Joyce read them out loud once again. "I'm..." Seven lights. "Looking..." Three lights. "For..." Three more lights. "Him." She gasped and covered, almost about to cry. Wherever Terry was...she was looking for him, for Will.

She let out a couple of tears and said, "Thank you, Terry! Thank you so much!" She wiped them away and sniffed. "D-do you know where he might be?"

After half a minute, six lights flickered. "Around..." Four lights. "Here..." Nine lights. "Somewhere." She sighed. That was vague, like how Will said he was "here" though he wasn't, at least, not to her. "Where's 'here', Terry?"

---

That was a good question, and unfortunately, she didn't know the answer to that. How could she describe this place to her?

---

The brown-haired woman then remembered something...when she saw Will behind that wallpaper, he told her that where he was is dark and cold. Her face lit up when she remembered that. Now she might know what Terry is talking about. "W-wait, Terry!"

---

*"D-don't answer that. Just..."* She heard her sob, making her heart drop. *"When you find him...can you please bring him back to me?"*

---

Well, that was a quick answer, so she instantly put her hand on the 'Y'.

---

The light above the 'Y' flickered. "Y..." Then the light over the 'E'. "E..." And finally, the light over the 'S'. "S. Yes!" She smiled, now crying tears of joy. "Thank you, Terry. Thank you..."

---

The woman smiled, glad she could make her happy, and murmured, "You're welcome." How could she not? Bringing him and even Barb back to Hawkins was her goal, of course she would bring him back to her.

Suddenly, the growling she heard earlier was heard again, making her lost her smile instantly and pointed her gun and flashlight at the direction. She saw that shadow she's seen earlier. It was standing though and it looked...inhuman. Its hands...it clawed hands...scraped through the window. She gasped, backing away from it. She now recognized that figure.

It was the thing trying to get out of Joyce's wallpaper.

She muttered a curse as it then crashed through the window and got inside. She screamed and ran as fast as she could from it, mentally praying for her life.

---

Joyce saw the lights flickering like crazy, making her feel very

worried for her friend. She muttered under her breath, "Please find him alive...please be alive too..." If her son and her friend become dead...

Oh God, she didn't even want to THINK of what might happen.

---

The dirty-blonde-haired woman got out of the house and continued running into the woods. After a while, she stopped and looked back with her flashlight and gun. She didn't hear that growling again, making her release of a sigh of relief. Twice has she outran it.

Now, time to find Will and Barb. Cautious of luring that creature to her again, Terry whisper-shouted, "Will?! Barbara?!" She roamed through the woods, hoping to find any sign of either of them.

---

On the railroad, the kids roamed through it with their compasses, hoping to find the gate. They all changed out of their funeral clothes. Jane's hair was back to their normal curls. She wore her usual coat, a white shirt with a Star Wars picture on it, blue jeans, and black and white sneakers. Mike still had his disguise on, but now had on a beige coat that also belonged to Jane. Lucas wore a red-orange coat, a multi-colored striped shirt, faded-blue jeans, and black sneakers. Dustin had on a blue coat, a turquoise shirt with a white logo on it, sandy-brown pants, and white sneakers. The two boys were walking at the front, the tomboy and the freckled boy following them from behind.

While the two boys were talking about something, Mike wiped his nose. Lucas saw that and continued talking to Dustin. "Do you think he's acting weird?" he asked him.

He gave him a weird look. "You're asking if the weirdo is acting weird?" he replied.

He rolled his eyes at him. "I mean, weirder than usual?"

He shrugged. "I dunno, who cares?" Lucas rolled his eyes at him again. Now he was starting to feel skeptical about Mike again.



Mike looked more and more worried about the rest of the kids. He didn't want them to be near the gate...

He already had unpleasant experiences with it.

It all started this one day...

---

*He was in his room, sitting on his bed next to his father and the doctor. "How far, Dad?" he asked him.*

*"Farther than we have ever gone before," the man answered as he showed him a picture of a Russian politician.*

*"The bath?"*

*"Yes," both men answered.*

*"Is that alright?" Dr. Brenner asked.*

*He didn't like the bath, he always felt trapped whenever he was in it. However, both of them wanted him to be in there, so he had to do it, for them. He nodded. "Yes."*

...

*In the room where the bath was, Mike was being escorted by two scientists up to the top of the bath. He only wore a beige unitard with one rectangle horizontally on his chest and three rectangles vertically aligned across the lower part of his torso. As he went upstairs and approached another team of scientists near the top of the bath, he looked around nervously, wishing that his dad or the doctor was with him instead of downstairs.*

*He faced one scientist who put on his headgear. Another scientist pulled the wheel on top of the bath and opened it up, revealing warm water flowing through. He saw the instrument used to carry him down appear, so he walked onto it and grabbed each of the poles. A scientist pushed a button to make him go down and Mike slowly felt the water submerging his body. Before being completely submerged, a different scientist placed a transparent mask on his head so that he could breathe while being underwater. Finally, he was in the bath.*

*Once the instrument stopped, he let go of the poles and stepped off of it. It then got up. He saw his father and Dr. Brenner looking at him in the tank. Both waved at him, making him wave back and smile a little. He felt a little less nervous when they did that.*

*But then the outer layer of the tank closed, now that nervousness coming back.*

---

His breathing became a little heavy at that flashback. He had to stop them somehow.

He grabbed Jane's arm and said, "Jane, turn back."

She looked at him weirdly. "What? Why?" she asked concernedly.

"I'm...tired."

The tomboy sighed. "I'm sure we're almost there, somehow. Just hold on until then, okay?" Feeling defeated, he nodded. He looked back, feeling the nervousness he felt then. If that wasn't going stop them...

He looked back at the trail they were following...his nose bleeding a little.

---

In the woods, Jonathan and Kali were walking around to find the monster. To break the silence between them, Kali stated, "You haven't given me an answer."

He gave her a puzzled look. "What?" he asked.

"You said I was saying something in that photo you took two days ago and that's why you took it."

"Oh, uh..." He paused, then shrugged. "I dunno. My guess is that...I saw this girl trying to be someone she's not." She looked at him in offense when he said that. "And at that moment, it shined through and you could just, you know, be yourself."

She couldn't believe that was his answer, huffing. "Wow, such bullshit."

He stopped in confusion. "What?" he repeated.

She stopped and turned to him. "I'm not trying to be like someone else."

He sighed and continued walking. "Forget it, then. I thought it was a good picture."

She scoffed and walked with him. "A good picture? You took that without my consent. I didn't ask you to take a picture of me taking off my shirt!"

He raised his voice. "I said I'm sorry, alright?!"

"Then take back that statement that it was a good picture!" He didn't reply, now irritating her even more. "What? You thought about you did was okay?"

"No! I never said that!"

"Then why did you say that?!"

"I don't know! I do think it's a good picture!"

She scoffed again and stopped, crossing her arms. "Oh, so that you can use it for other things?"

He stopped and gave her a objecting look. "No! I'm not like that! I don't even think you're that attractive!" Kali felt her blood run cold as he continued walking to find the monster. She had never had anybody say that about her. Now she thought of him more worse than before.

"I thought you were an alright guy, you know?"

He stopped and turned to her, his look of disbelief. "Really?"

She nodded. "Yeah, really. I was thinking, 'Jonathan Byers, another teenager with a single mum and a younger sibling like me. Jee, I guess he wasn't the pretentious creep that I think he is.'"

Now he scoffed at her and began walking to her. "That so? I was

thinking that you were an alright girl."

She raised an eyebrow. "That so?"

He stopped a few inches in front of her and said, "Yeah, and you know what I thought? 'Kali Ives, just like me, parents divorced, living with a mom and a younger sibling. Perhaps she's not acting like a suburban girl who thinks she's rebellious by doing what other suburban girls do, the only difference being that she's not white, so she thinks she's so special.'" Her eyes widened at that statement. "And she won't go through that phase when it passes at adulthood, marrying some boring one-time jock, who now works sales, and living out a perfectly boring little life until they can't stand each other and file a divorce because they weren't the way they were when they were younger." He paused to shake his head. "No, she's not like that. She couldn't be." He finally exhaled and walked past her.

The black-haired girl could still feel her blood running cold, looking down at the ground. What he said...god, what he said...how could she make of that? She didn't know how...what the hell...?

She let out a sigh and followed him, still trying to process about what he said about her.

---

Becky was calling Hideaway's number, now being absolutely worried about her sister. Carl was beside her for support. The line picked up and one of the waitresses there greeted, *"Hello, thank you for calling Hideaway, the pub where you won't get caught in a hurry. How may I help you?"*

"H-hey, uh..." the woman said over the phone. "Is Terry Ives there? She's my sister and I wanted to check up on her."

*"Terry? Oh, actually...she didn't come in today."*

Her eyes widened at that statement. "What? What do you mean she didn't come today?"

*"Exactly what I said. She didn't come here today, not this morning, not*

*this afternoon. Things are busy around here and it's hard for us to serve customers with one waitress short, you know?"* Her sigh was heavy, Carl squeezing her shoulder for support. *"Are you alright, m'am?"*

"Y-yeah. Thanks for answerin'." She then hung up the phone and shook her head. "Sh-she never came to her work."

His eyes widened. "Why?"

She shrugged, scoffing. "I dunno. I..." She shook her head again. "I don't even know the number to her night work..." Now her worry heightened. Where the hell was she...?

---

Later in the day, the kids went a junkyard, still following their compasses. All of them were beginning to feel tired, stopping at the middle of the junkyard. Dustin looked worried. "Oh no," he said.

Lucas began to worry too. "Oh no?" he asked.

He turned to his friends. "We're headed back home."

His two friends' eyes widened. "What?!" Jane exclaimed.

"Why?!" Lucas added. "Are you sure?!"

He nodded as he pointed at the sun setting. "Setting sun, right there. We looped back around."

"And you just realized that now?!"

He looked at him in objection. "Why is this on me?!"

"Cause YOU'RE the compass genius!"

"Then what does yours say?"

Lucas and Jane looked at their compasses and answered a bit off-sync, "North." All of them sighed in irritation.

"Makes no damn sense," Dustin stated.

"Maybe the gate moved or something?" Jane asked.

He shook his head. "Nah, I don't think it's the gate. I think it's something else screw with our compasses."

When he said that, Lucas thought of what-or actually...who, was screwing with the compasses. "Maybe it's something here?" the tomboy asked.

The curly-haired boy shook his head. "No, it's gotta be like a super magnet."

"It's not a magnet," Lucas stated as he got his friends' attention and he pointed at...Mike. "It's him!" He looked at them nervously and worriedly, breathing heavily. "He's been acting weirder than usual! If he can slam a door with his mind, he definitely screw with our compasses!"

Jane looked at him in disbelief. "Why would he do that?!"

"Because he's trying to sabotage our mission! He's a traitor!" Mike felt hurt by that statement, almost looking like he was about to cry. The boy approached him and asked, "You did it, didn't you? You don't want us to reach the gate! You don't us to find Will!" The freckled boy stayed silent, feeling intimidated by him.

The tomboy walked to her black-haired friend. "Lucas, seriously! Leave him alone!"

"Admit it."

Mike shook his head and said, "No."

"ADMIT IT!" He jolted back from that. Lucas roughly grabbed his wrist and saw a streak of fresh blood on the cuff of his jacket. He scoffed and let go of him forcefully. "Knew it, fresh blood."

"Lucas, come on!"

He turned to his female friend and stated, "I saw him wipe his nose when we walked the railroad tracks! He was using his powers!"

"N-no! That has to be old blood!" She then looked at Mike for confirmation. "Right, Mike?"

He sighed heavily, looking like he was going to cry. In a shaky voice, he answered, "I-it's...not...safe. It's dangerous." Jane's eyes widened in shock as she now looked at Lucas.

"See?! What did I tell you?! He was playing us from the beginning!"

She was shocked that Mike did that...but...maybe it was for good intentions? "Th-that's not true! He helped us find Will!"

Lucas huffed in utter disbelief. "No, he didn't! Where the hell is he then?!" He looked around for a bit, then back to her. "I don't see him!"

She looked at him angrily. "You know what I mean-"

"No! I actually don't, Jane!" He then pointed at the freckled boy. "Think about it! He could have told us where the Upside Down was immediately, but he didn't! Instead, he made us run around like a bunch of headless chickens!" The curly-haired girl clenched her fists, never feeling so...angry with him before.

Dustin, the only one who looked to have a level head, approached the two and tried to separate them. "Alright, cut it out-" he said before Lucas pushed him away.

"No! He used us, all of us! He helped just enough to get what he needed: food and shelter! He's like a stray dog!" Mike felt more hurt by his words, his eyes watering.

"Screw you, Lucas!" Jane yelled at him.

"No, screw YOU, Jane!" he yelled back at her. "You're blind! You're blind because you like that he's a guy that isn't disgusted by the fact that you look like a boy!" She gasped, her blood feeling like ice and a lump beginning to form in her throat. The fact that he even said that...she could feel the tears coming.

Dustin looked at Lucas disapprovingly, shaking his head. "Dude, that was low," he said to him in a serious voice. Mike saw the saddened look on Jane's face, feeling like his heart dropped. Seeing that look and knowing the fact that Lucas made her have that look...it sparked a fire of anger inside of him. His sad face was gone and his angered

one in its place, the boy clenching his fists.

The black-haired boy realized what he just said and seeing that he made her look like she was about to cry. He sighed and put a hand on her shoulder. "Jane, I'm sorry-" he began before Jane smacked his hand off her shoulder. He sighed. "I didn't mean to say it like that, it's just-"

"Just what?!" she shouted in a shaky voice. "What, are YOU disgusted by the way I look?!"

He shook his head. "N-no, but-"

"Then why did you say that?!" She shoved him, the boy taking it and looking at her with a serious face.

"I don't see any other boy besides me, Dustin, and Will that isn't appalled by your boyish look, alright?! That's what I was trying to say, Jane! And that's why you're keeping him around, even after you left him at the quarry!" She looked angry again, clenching her fists tighter. "Wake up, Jane! Wake the hell up!" He pointed at a now angered Mike. "He knows where Will is and now, he's going to let him die in the Upside Down."

"Shut up!" she shouted at him, shoving him again.

"For all we know, it's his fault!" He then shoved her back.

"Shut! Up!" She then shoved him once more like she was going to fight him.

Now Mike couldn't stand this anymore. He felt the need to protect Jane, so he began storming to Lucas. Dustin looked at him worriedly, saying worriedly, "Mike?"

He staggered a bit, but regained his balance. "We're out here looking for some stupid monster, but have you ever thought that he could be the monster, Jane?! Huh?!" He then shoved her back again, angering her more. Suddenly, Mike shoved him to the ground, not only surprising him, but also Jane.

"Shut up," he said to him coldly. "Stop hurting Jane." Her eyes



widened when he said that while Lucas looked at him angrily, standing up and storming up to him.

"Me, hurting Jane?" he asked in disbelief. "Me, HURTING JANE?! Take a look at a mirror, you asshole! You made her cry at the quarry!"

"Because I thought Will was dead and he was lying, Lucas!" she yelled at him, her voice almost a sob. "Now stop!"

"You no-good, back-stabbing piece of shit!" He then tackled him to the ground and beginning to fight him.

Jane looked completely aghast by this happening as well as Dustin. She ran to Lucas, who was on top of Mike, and tried pulling him off. "Lucas, stop!" she exclaimed before he pushed her off of him.

"Dude, cut it out!" Dustin shouted at them as he ran and helped Jane up.

Mike tried to push him off of himself as he took a couple punches. He didn't know how to defend himself other than pushing. God, those punches hurt so much...

"LUCAS! STOP HURTING HIM!" the tomboy yelled, now beginning to cry.

"DUDE! STOP!" the curly-haired boy also yelled.

The dark-haired boy decided to give him a taste of his own medicine and punched him, stunning him for a bit. He finally pushed him off and stood up, backing away from him quickly. Lucas felt the hit on his cheek and stood up, storming towards him again. "You're gonna get it."

Now both of his friends ran to him to stop him from fighting him more. "LUCAS!" they both shouted.

Mike began straining himself, then screamed from the top of his lungs. He used his power to push Lucas far from him. He got blown away, hitting a piece of metal hard and being knocked unconscious.

Jane and Dustin looked aghast at that, the girl muttering, "Oh my God..."

"Jesus Christ!" Dustin shouted he and Jane ran towards their unconscious friend. Mike's breath became shaky, his nose bleeding and the boy himself shaking at what he's done.

The two kids approached their friend, Jane saying, "Lucas? Lucas, are you alright?!"

"Lucas, come on, wake up!" Dustin shouted, he and the tomboy nudging his body to wake him up.

Jane began to cry more. "Come on, Lucas! Wake up!"

"Lucas!"

She couldn't believe this, one second, she was arguing with him, another, he was fighting Mike, now, he was unconscious...maybe dead. She turned to the freckled boy and yelled, "Why the hell did you do that to him?!" He saw the sad and distressed look on her face, just like back at the quarry, now starting to cry. "I knew you were trying to defend yourself, but you didn't have to try and kill him! What's wrong with you?!" He began to sob, now remembering more the flashback from earlier and hearing her voice now distorted. "What is wrong with you?!"

---

*In the bath, Mike closed his eyes and tried his best to find the Russian man in the picture, hearing overlapping chatter.*

...

*A moment passed and he finally opened his eyes in another place. It was pitch-black darkness and the ground felt wet under his feet.*

*He heard a masculine voice speak in Russian, him looking at the direction and seeing him dressed in Russian winter attire. He cautiously walked to him, his voice becoming louder. He finally stopped in front of him, looking up at him and listening to what he was saying. He then walked around him, wondering if the man could see him. He went back in front of him again.*

*He heard a sudden growl from a different direction, making him look at that direction. The Russian man dissolved into the darkness as the boy heard the growling and snarling. He breathed heavily and stepped back. What was that? Why was he hearing that? It sounded so dangerous...*

*The snarling became louder and he began running the opposite direction away from it, hoping to get away from it. He could still hear the loud growling. It was like...he couldn't escape it.*

...

*He opened his eyes and began yelling, "HELP!" He looked terrified, banging the interior of the bath. His nose was bleeding from both nostrils and he began to cry. "HELP ME!"*

---

He sniffled, feeling bad for what he has done. He almost killed Lucas, he made Jane mad at him, he...

He felt like he shouldn't be with them anymore.

He felt like he shouldn't waste their time since they were mad at him.

Jane was focused back on her African-American friend and continued telling him to wake up. He began to stir, making them both feel so relieved. "Lucas..." Jane murmured. "Are you okay?"

He sat up and rubbed the back of his head, flinching at the pain. "Lucas," Dustin said as he held up three fingers. "Okay, how many fingers am I holding up?" He sighed as a reply and stood up, making his friends stand up with him.

"Can I see your head, Lucas?" Jane asked as she placed a hand behind his head. He flinched again and slapped it away. She gave him a shocked look.

"It hurts..." he muttered as he began to leave.

The tomboy furrowed her brows and called out, "Lucas, wait!"

Dustin grabbed her arm to stop her from getting to him. "Let him go, Jane," he said to her. "Just let him go." She sighed and wiped the

tears off of her face. She hated that. She hated that she was angry with Lucas and that he fought Mike. Mike wasn't in the right either though, he almost killed him there.

She sniffed and looked where Mike was supposed to be, but...he was gone. Her eyes widened, her asking, "Wh-where's Mike?" Dustin looked where she was looking and looked just as shocked. They began looking for him around the junkyard. "Mike?!"

"Michael?!" Dustin called out.

"Mike?! Where are you?!"

"Mike?!"

They both continued to look around the junkyard for him, but neither had any luck. That made them both reach to one conclusion:

He was gone, he left them.

---

Now nighttime, Kali and Jonathan continued roaming the woods, Kali having a flashlight to guide their way through the woods. Both haven't spoken to each other since their argument in the afternoon, being absolutely quiet.

Suddenly, Kali heard a faint whimper, making her stop and look around to find out where it came from. Jonathan stopped and turned to her, asking, "What, you tired or something?"

"No, shut up," she answered him, making him scoff.

"What?"

"I think I heard something." He sighed and stayed quiet for her. Soon, they both heard the whimpering, now being concerned about what could be making that noise.

...

They walked the direction it came from and shined their lights at where it came from. Both looked aghast when they saw a wounded

deer. They both approached it, the girl looking like she was about to cry, running a couple of her fingers through its fur. "It got hit by a car..." she murmured in a somber tone as she shook her head. "We can't just leave it be..." She turned to the auburn-haired guy for some help. He pointed at the gun she had. She could put it out of its misery...

She pointed it at the deer's head and unlocked the safety. The more she heard it whimper, the more she didn't want to do it. She took a deep breath. She thought that when it dies, it wouldn't feel hurt anymore, just to get herself to shoot it.

"I can shoot it, if you don't wanna..." Jonathan offered.

She shook her head. "I'll be fine." He nodded as they both looked at its head. Half a minute passed by and she still hadn't pulled the trigger. Now, she felt ready-

The deer was suddenly pulled away into the bushes, shocking them both and making them jolt back. Kali even dropped the gun for a bit. Both of them started panting from the shock they had. "What the hell was that...?" Kali muttered, knowing she and Jonathan couldn't answer that. Best guess?

The monster.

...

They followed the blood trail it left off, Kali pointing her gun cautiously. Hell, both of them were cautious, ready to fight whatever took the deer at any moment. "Where could it go...?" the black-haired girl muttered to herself, looking around.

"I don't know..." Jonathan replied quietly. They both stopped when the blood trail stopped. He looked at his right. "You see any more blood?"

Kali looked to her left. "No." They both looked at each other and decided to split up, hoping to find any more blood.

---

Terry was getting a lot more tired. Hours upon hours on calling Will

and Barbara and nothing. Absolutely nothing. He wasn't even in Castle Byers, nor was she at her home. They had to be around here somewhere, they had to!

She began to yawn, but tried to shake it off. She won't sleep until she finds any trace of him.

Suddenly, she heard footsteps from afar, turning to the direction the sounds came from. The footsteps continued in a constant pace, as if someone was running. Her eyes widened at one possibility...

"Will...Barbara..." she murmured under her breath, running to follow that noise.

---

Kali walked around to find more blood, but then...a tree caught her eye. She saw that it had a hole at the bottom of the trunk, so she walked towards it and crouched down in front of it. Looking into it, it was wet and...slimy, very disgusting. She put her hand through it to see if it was there and it really was.

"Jonathan?!" she called out, looking around to see if he was around. He wasn't, making her sigh and look at it again. Maybe the monster made it. She'll have to check.

Putting on the safety, she put her purse on the ground and crawled into the hole. She could feel the cold sharply hitting her and the nastiness of the slime and goo get on her clothes and hair. She had to endure those if she was ever to find that thing and kill it.

---

The woman continued running towards the sounds of the running steps, hoping to find them. She suddenly stopped when she heard some gnawing not too far from her. She pointed her light and her gun at the noise. From a short distance, she could see the creature feeding on a deer. Her eyes widened. Where the hell did that animal come from...?

...

Kali finally got out of the hole and into the dark and cold place Terry

was in. Her eyes widened at the sight of this place. It was like the woods, but cold...dark...disgusting. What the hell was this place?

As she looked around, she saw that her flashlight was flickering on and off. That began to annoy her, making her smack it a little. What the hell was wrong with it? It didn't act like this when she was in the woods-

Suddenly, she heard loud growling, making her freeze up and look aghast. It was the creature, feeding on the deer she and Jonathan saw. Goosebumps rose from her skin, her breathing shaky and heavy from just the sight of it. So that was it.

That was the thing that took Barb.

She shakily pointed her gun at it and was about to release the safety, but stopped. It made a noise it's unlocked and she doubted this thing was not attracted by noise. So instead, she slowly began to back away.

...

Terry could see a flickering light shining on the creature. She looked puzzled. She didn't see a light when she was chasing down Will or Barbara. Maybe someone else was here? Who, though?

...

Kali took deep breathes, trying to keep calm, though in a situation like this, it was hard. She then accidentally snapped a twig, startling her. The monster turned to her and roared, now making her absolutely mortified. "Shit!" she exclaimed quietly as she unlocked the safety and shot at it. It seemed to have deflected the bullet, much to her utter disbelief. She shot again, two times, and those bullets did nothing to it. She couldn't believe that. Her gun was useless here...

She dropped the flashlight and began running for her life, the monster chasing after her.

---

Jonathan heard faint gunfire from a distance, making him feel very worried about Kali now. "Kali?!" he called out as he ran towards the

direction the gunfire came from.

---

Terry never looked so shocked in her life. She heard gunfire and saw the bullets bounce off the monster like it was nothing. Now she knew shooting it wouldn't kill it. Still, she wondered who that was. She doubted Will or Barbara carried a gun...

Well, actually...maybe it was possible. Maybe it was chasing them and somehow, they got their hands on a gun...that made some sense.

Wanting to know, she started chasing after the mysterious person with the gun.

---

Jonathan kept calling out Kali's name before seeing her purse. He continued calling her name and moving away from the hole, not noticing it as it slowly began to close itself...

---

**Done! What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes?**

**It was enjoying for me to write Terry interacting with Joyce while being in the Upside Down. I thought about this and thought, "Why not?" Hope you guys liked that! Also, how am I handling Kali and Jonathan so far?**

**The scene in the junkyard was a bit hard for me to write because...well, I hate it when things go south for the kids. This is no exception. I figured that Mike would still fight Lucas in this AU, but in a different way, while Jane would still be more emotional during all of that. I think it fits for their characters. What do you guys think?**

**Before I go, I must say that I'm unable to update this tomorrow because of something with family and school, so yeah...**

**I don't know what will happen with the net neutrality issue here in the United States. Maybe it will affect my updates or even my access to here, maybe it won't. If things DO go fine, then my updates will be back to normal. If not... \*sigh\* If that does**



happen though, don't try and steal my fanfic. Don't even try to continue it. Sorry if that sounds cruel, but I'm serious. It's my fanfic and without my permission, you'd be doing me a disfavor.

Now, with all of that aside, continue to support this fanfic and hopefully, if it's possible, I'll see you guys in the next chapter. :)

**\*EDITS of 09/10/19:**

-Changed "making her feel like her heart dropped." to "making her heart drop."

-Had Terry scream as she ran away from the Demogorgon

-Changed "yet another scientist" to "a different scientist"

-Moved the ellipses in "He looked back at the trail they were following...his nose bleeding a little."

-Fixed a typo

-Combined two sentences when Jane clenches her fists

-Had Lucas and Jane shove each other more

-Changed the fight between Lucas and Mike just a little

-Replaced "Barbara, probably?" to "Who, though?"

## 15. Where the Hell Were You All Day!

Here's the next chapter!

---

Kali kept running and screaming, "Jonathan!" She thought she lost sight of the monster, so she kept yelling his name.

"Kali!" she heard him shout out faintly. She stopped and turned to the direction it came from desperately.

"Jonathan?!"

...

Terry suddenly stopped and looked terrified when she heard Kali's screams. She felt stiff in utter shock that one of her daughters was here. Was SHE the one she was chasing after? All this time...? She couldn't be, right? How the hell did she even get here?!

Suddenly, the woman whipped back at the monster growling, seeing its figure not too far off. She began running away from it.

...

Kali heard fast footsteps coming towards her, making her feel more frantic than before and run faster. "Jonathan! Where are you?!"

"I'm right here, Kali! Follow my voice!" She turned to the direction that came from and began running to it.

...

Terry was deciding whether or not to follow her. She had a boy and a girl to find here. She promised her best friend that she will find her son...but her daughter...she was in danger...

She stopped and caught her breath for a second, thinking about what to do. Shortly after though, she turned and saw the monster right there. She gasped and dropped her flashlight, running to a tree and hiding behind it.

...

From an angle, Kali stopped and saw it too, making her do the same. She began catching her breath, being absolutely horrified by what's happening. That monster was near her and she could die at any second...

*"Kali! Come on! Follow my voice! I'm right here!"* she heard Jonathan call out not too far away. She looked back at the monster, seeing if the coast was clear to go. If that thing was in her sight of running back, then it wasn't...

...

The woman began to take deep breathes and still think about whether or not to chase Kali down. From the corner of her eye, she saw Kali running towards another tree. She went to a conclusion and muttered under her breath, "Goddamn it..."

...

Kali went inside the hole she came from and crawled through it as fast as she could. She could see the hole closing, making her feel more terrified than before. However, the goo looked breakable enough, so she tore right through it with her hand. She felt another hand pull her through the hole until she was finally out and into the woods. She never felt so relieved in her life. Without a second thought, she hugged Jonathan tight, shivering from the cold down there and from the experience she just witnessed.

Jonathan hugged her back just as tight. "It's okay, I got ya," he said to her in a quiet voice. Her heart was racing from the fear and adrenaline that was induced from the experience.

Suddenly, another hand, one covered in white, popped out of the goo too, making them both release their hug and look back at it. They both looked absolutely puzzled and scared. "Wh-what the hell is that?" the auburn-haired guy asked. Kali shook her head as answer, not knowing what the hand was. It didn't look like the monster's, that's for sure.

Another hand tore through as well and they both ripped a hole in the goo, revealing...someone in a hazmat suit. Both of them scooted back a little as the person managed to crawl out of the hole, laying on their back and panting. Both of the teenagers looked at each other and stood up, slowly walking over to the person in the hazmat suit. When they saw their face, their looks of utter shock came, both gasping.

"M-Mum...?" Kali murmured in a shocked tone. It was, in fact, Terry, that came out of that hole.

The woman looked up at her adoptive daughter and whispered, "Kali..."

The hole finally closed itself up, looking like a normal part of a tree again.

---

In Joyce's house, Hopper was there and earlier, he checked the lights to see if the labs bugged her place, which they thankfully didn't. He then told her about him and Terry discovering that Will's body was a fake and the experience they had in the lab.

"O-okay...and Terry was with you this WHOLE time?" the frantic woman said.

The police chief sighed and nodded. "Up until I got knocked out," he answered, smoking a cigarette she gave him. "I don't know what the hell they did to her. They look to be the type of people to torture her or something. She did tell me that she promised not to come anywhere near there and disclose any information about them."

Joyce widened her eyes and thought about something for a second. There was earlier, when she was communicated by her through the lights. She shook her head and said, "I don't think she's there."

Hopper gave her a puzzled look. "What? How would you know that?" he asked her.

She then stood up and gestured the man to follow her, in which he did. She stopped in front of the wall of letters and lights and pointed

at it. "Earlier, she communicated with me through this, j-just like Will."

His eyes widened, but still had the puzzled look. "What?"

"Wh-when each light glows above a letter, that means they're talking to me." She paused to look at him. "A-a few days ago, Will talked to me through these and now, earlier, when Lonnie left, Terry talked to me through this."

This shit sounded crazy to him, but since everything was getting crazy, he decided to trust her. "Did she say anything I should know about?"

She nodded, smiling a little. "Sh-she said that she was going to find Will."

His eyes widened more. "Did she say where...?"

She shook her head, losing her smile. "N-no, but...I kinda figured out where she could be."

The man then remembered that hole in the wall. Maybe she...escaped through there? That made some sense. "She's not in the lab..." he murmured to himself, reaching to a conclusion about her whereabouts...

She was in that hole, somewhere inside there...

"Hopper?" Joyce asked.

He turned to her and said, "The hole in the wall I told you about. She could be in there...looking for Will." Now her eyes widened at that. "That means that Will might be in there too." Her mouth hung open in utter shock.

"C-can she get out somehow?!"

He shrugged. "I hope she will." Joyce sighed heavily and placed her hands on her temples again. She did hope that she and Will would get out wherever the hell they were alive. She then took a deep breath and felt a little calm.

"Okay...and also...that room you mentioned from the upstairs. You said it was a kid's room?" She sat down, making him sit with her.

He nodded. "Yeah. I think it's more like a prison."

"Then how do ya know it's a kid's room?"

He sighed once again. "There was a stuffed animal, the size of the bed was small enough for a kid, there was a drawing-"

Joyce looked surprised when he mentioned that. "Drawing? Y-you didn't mention a drawing."

"It's a drawing of two guys and a child. It said 'Dad', 'Doctor', and 'M11'."

"W-was it good?"

He shook his head. "They were stick figures, Joyce. What'd you expect from a kid's drawing?" She scoffed and got up to get one of Will's drawings. She handed it to him and sat back down, taking a swig of her cigarette.

"Wasn't Will, then," she replied.

The man looked at the drawing and sighed. "Terry practically told me the same thing. She said that she recognized the kid in the drawing..." He trailed off as he realized something. "Earl...Earl said that the night when Benny died, he saw some kid with a shaved head with Benny. I pressed him and he said it might be Will, but..." He then got the newsletter with Karen Bertuzzi in it.

"M-maybe it wasn't?" she asked.

"Look." She did look at the article with Karen's picture. "This woman, Karen Bertuzzi, claims to have her children, Michael and Nancy, stolen. She sued Brenner and Wheeler, who was her ex-husband, she sued the government...the claims came to nothing, but what if..." He had the face of realization again. "What if, after all this time, I've been chasing after some other kid instead of Will?" It didn't help that he made the decision to have Terry investigate with him too. Maybe she was really looking for Will and he didn't, so...

---

The three began walking to the Ives home, Terry now out of her hazmat suit. She was really weary from her experience, so the two teens gave her some support by having her arms around their shoulders. "I...I can't believe you were in there, Mum..." Kali said in a weak voice.

"I...I know, Kali..." she replied. "But...I felt the same when I heard you there..."

"I crawled out of a hole, but you? How did you get there?!"

The woman sighed. Since she was in trouble now, what happened that one night didn't apply to her. Since she didn't feel ready to explain though, she replied, "I'll tell you later." Kali sighed and looked forward to her home, feeling worried about her mother...and scared of what she experienced back there...wherever the hell was was...

---

Becky was apathetically watching the news with Carl, holding his hand. Her worry about her sister grew stronger by the hour. She was missing the entire day. Where the hell was she?

Suddenly, the doorbell rang, Carl getting up and letting go of her hand to go to the door. "I'll get it," he said to her, the woman nodding. As he opened the door though, he looked shocked to see not only Kali and Jonathan, but also...Terry. "Terry?" The short-haired woman's eyes enlarged as she saw her at the door and stood up. She quickly walked to the door with a stunned look.

"Hey..." she greeted back, looking at her worried sister.

"Oh my God, where the hell were you all day?!" she exclaimed, needing an answer.

The woman sighed and told the teens, "You two go upstairs. I need to talk to them." They both nodded as they got her inside, put her on the La-Z-Boy, then got upstairs. Kali went into her room to grab a change of clothes and then to the bathroom to take a warm shower.

...

After she undressed herself, she got into the shower and turned on the warm water. It felt great to have all of that goo and cold get away in one splash. As she washed herself, she could remember everything from the experience: the injured deer, the sharp cold air of the mysterious place, seeing the monster eat the deer...the monster itself. She breathed heavily at those thoughts, remembering them so vividly...her scared look came back onto her face. Seriously, she couldn't get over from what she saw before...

...

"So, let me get this straight," Becky said, being near her sister. "After your extra hours, you skipped work to go find Barbara YOURSELF?!"

The woman sighed. That was a half-lie and thankfully, she bought it. However, it did hurt her to see her all worried like this. She nodded. "Yeah-" she replied before her sister cut her off.

"What the hell, Terry?! You could've joined the goddamn search party! You even missed the funeral!"

She shrugged. "They weren't finding her, so I thought I should take this matter into my own hands."

Becky face-palmed while Carl looked at her in disbelief. "That's just stupid, Terry," he said to her. "You began worrying her and you were even worrying me!"

Terry sighed again. "Look, guys, I'm sorry. This...all of this shit going on, I just...I just feel the need to resolve it all, you know?"

"You didn't even call us!" Becky shouted at her. "I mean, with Jane's friend dead and Kali's friend missing, you could've been missing too!" She paused to sigh. "You had me so worried, Terry. You know that? I didn't come visit you and the girls to have you go missing!" Carl held her hand and whispered to her to calm her down.

Terry felt terrible to have her worry about her like that. A part of her wished that she could have stayed back in that mysterious place and continued looking for Will, but another part of her was glad she got out of there to make sure her daughter was alright and that her sister



wouldn't have to worry about her absence. "Becky..." Her sister looked up at her, seeing her frown. "I am so sorry. I promise I won't do it again."

Her sister sighed and gave her a hug. "As long as you keep it," she whispered to her. She nodded as Becky released the hug. "I put your stew back in the fridge, if you're hungry."

She was, but at the same time, she didn't feel like eating anything. She wearily smiled, slowly stood up, and replied, "Thanks, but no. I feel like sleeping after all of that...searching."

The short-haired woman nodded in understanding. "Alright. Me 'n Carl'll be here if ya need anything." Terry nodded as she slowly walked upstairs to her room to change her clothes. The clothes she was wearing, she wore all day and possibly all night. She didn't want to sleep in it.

...

Kali entered her bedroom, wearing a plain pair of white pajamas. She saw Jonathan laying out a sleeping bag she hadn't used since she was a kid. Both looked at each other for a bit until the guy asked, "Feel better?" She nodded.

"Yeah," she replied.

He stood up and pointed at the sleeping bag. "Is this okay? I found it in the closet." She nodded again, this time as a reply. "I mean, I can go home. I know your mom told me that it's fine for me to stay for the night, but if you don't-"

She shook her head at him. "No, it's fine." She then sat on one of the sides of her bed and sighed. She rubbed her face, still looking scared of her experience in the mysterious place.

Feeling bad for her, Jonathan sat next to her and patted her back. "Hey, at least...at least it can't get us in here."

She didn't look at him, keeping her scared face. "We don't know for sure. Maybe it can." Jonathan sighed, thinking of any other things to tell her to calm her down.

In a few seconds, however, the door opened, revealing Terry with her hair in a bun and wearing a turquoise night gown and white slippers. Both of them looked at her as she closed the door and looked at them. She slowly walked to Kali and asked, "How are you feeling, sweetie?" Kali gulped and looked away from her. The woman felt heartbroken to see her like this, so she sat next to her as well and gave her a side hug. "It must have been traumatic for you, sweetheart." Kali nodded, now looking sad.

The woman let out another sigh and stated, "I'm glad you're alright, at least. That you're alive..." She then had a look of sorrow. "I wouldn't know what to do if you died..." Kali looked like she was about to cry and hugged her mother back.

"Oh, Mum..."

Jonathan just observed this. He kind of liked that Kali's mother really cared for her, hugging her to comfort her and checking if she was alright. He knew his own mother would do the same for Will, but for him? Sometimes, but...she never gave him most of her attention in the past...

As the two females released their hug, Kali finally decided to ask something. "Mum...I need to know, how were you there? Why were you there? Why were you wearing a hazmat suit?"

Terry took a deep breath, stood up, and faced the teens. She thought it was time for them to learn the truth. "I'll answer, but I need you two to promise something," she stated, the two of them nodding. "Don't tell anybody what I will be telling you. It will land you two and everyone else you tell this to in danger, alright?" They both looked shocked at that warning, but nodded again. "I was with Police Chief Hopper last night..."

---

The next morning, Jane was in the basement, since she arrived there last night and checked in with her aunt and uncle. She wore a short-sleeved plain gray shirt, jeans, and different sneakers. She was laying on the couch and trying to solve a Rubik's Cube. She felt frustrated at trying to solve it, so she dropped it onto the table and sat up. She then looked at the little fort she made for Michael. She let out a

heavy sigh and looked sorrowful, missing him. Why did he leave? Was it because of Lucas?

Was it because of her yelling at him?

She stood up, looking out the window to see if he was there. He wasn't, making her feel more heartbroken. Frustrated, she backed away from the window and threw the chair holding the blanket acting as the curtain. She then grabbed the sleeping bag and pillow and threw them across the room as hard as she could. She breathed heavily, feeling more frustrated and sad that he wasn't coming back to her. She hated that. She hated that so much...

She sunk down down to her knees and began to cry, covering her face and trying to wipe the tears away, being so forlorn about him being gone.

...

Upstairs, Terry had her hair down and still wore her night gown as she was on the phone with the police station. She hoped she could still investigate with Hopper. When the dial tone disappeared, she heard Florence greet, *"Hawkins Police Department. How may I help you?"*

"Hey, I'm Terry Ives. Is Chief Hopper there, by any chance?" she asked her.

*"No, m'am. What? One of your relatives went missing too?"*

She shook her head. "No, I just want to speak with him."

There was a small pause, then Florence asked, *"You one of the girls he slept with?"*

She looked a bit disgusted. "What? No. I just need to speak with him."

She heard her sigh. *"I'll tell him you gave him a call when he comes."* She then heard the dial tone, making her groan a little. She guessed he was fine, but investigating on his own now...

---

In a phone booth, Hopper called one of his workers to find Karen Bertuzzi. "Uh, yeah, Bertuzzi," he said. "B-E-R-T-U-Z-Z-I...yeah, I got a pen, hold on." He then got a pen from his coat and wrote down her address on his hand. After half a minute, he stopped. "Thanks, Frank. Say hello to the boys for me, too, would ya?"

He was about to hang up the phone until he heard Frank say, *"Wait."* He put the phone back onto his ear as he said, *"Flo wants to speak with you."*

He sighed and rolled his eyes. "Now?"

*"Now."* There was a short pause, then Flo's voice came on and said, *"Hopper, I need to tell you something."*

He sighed again. "What is it?"

*"Terry Ives was calling for you a few moments ago, saying she wants to speak with you."* His eyes widened at that piece of news. He thought she was...but...

"You...know her number?"

*"Ask Frank for that, not me."*

Frank then got on the phone again, asking, *"You need Terry's number?"*

Hopper got out his pen again and pointed it to the back of his hand. "Yeah. Hit me."

Meanwhile, in his car, Joyce was in the passenger's seat, looking at him writing down something else. She was getting curious.

He finished writing down her number and said, "Thanks, Frank." He then hung up, got another quarter, and placed it in the booth to call Terry's number. He kept hearing the dial tone, waiting for her to pick up.

---

"I'll go downstairs to get Jane," Terry said to Becky and Carl, the two of them nodding as she walked to the basement.

Suddenly, the two of them heard the phone ring, Becky standing up and saying, "I got it." She approached the phone and took it, saying, "Hello?"

---

"Uh, hey, Becky," Hopper greeted. "Is Terry there?"

---

Her eyes widened to hear his voice again. And he needs Terry again. What the hell was going on? "Uh...yeah...I can get her, if you like."

---

He nodded. "That'd be great. Thanks."

---

Becky set the phone down and faced her husband, who looked curious. "It's the chief again. He needs Terry."

Now he looked confused. "Why?"

She shrugged. "I dunno." She then headed to the direction that basement was at.

---

When Becky walked over to the phone, Terry entered into the basement and saw Jane crying. She saw the thrown hair and the sleeping bag and pillow, looking concerned and sad for her daughter. "Jane?" she asked, getting her attention and seeing her red eyes and sticky face. She felt even more terrible for her and walked towards her. "Jane, honey, what's the matter?"

She sniffled and wiped her nose. She didn't want her to know that she was crying over Mike, so she said, "I...I still can't get over Will, Mama..."

Her mother frowned, crouched down, and gave her a hug. "Oh, sweetie..." As she patted her hair, the tomboy hugged her back. "I'm so sorry this had to happen to you. He didn't deserve to die like that..." The girl nodded, though she knew he wasn't dead. Terry also knew he wasn't dead and still in wherever she was yesterday. Neither knew what the other were thinking though. "Jane, listen to me. I know this is hard on you right now..." She then released her hug with

her and looked into her eyes. "But, try to think of him in positive ways. Think of all the good times you had with him. Can you do that?" She nodded at her, making her smile.

Becky went downstairs and saw them sort of bonding with each other. She smiled a little at that, but lost it and said, "Terry." Both of them looked up at her. "The...the chief officer wants to talk to you."

Terry sighed and stood up, patting Jane's head and whispering to her, "Come up to eat breakfast when you're ready, sweetheart." She nodded and smiled at her as she gave her a kiss on the forehead and began walking upstairs. The girl sniffed, wondering what the police chief wanted with her mom.

...

She got to the phone and answered, "Hopper?"

---

The man sighed. That was definitely her voice. "Oh my God..." he muttered.

---

"What?" she asked before thinking of something. Maybe he was looking for her yesterday, when she was in that mysterious place.

---

"I thought you were..." Hopper paused, still in disbelief that he could hear her voice.

---

"In the labs?" she replied in a whisper. "Because I wasn't."

---

"I figured. I thought you were in that hole in the wall."

---

Her eyes widened. How did he know that? "I was..."

---

Hopper rubbed his face. "Did you escape or...?"

---

She shrugged. "I guess I did. I was looking for Will, then Kali was there-"

---

He raised an eyebrow. "Wait, Kali? That Indian girl you adopted?"

---

She nodded. "Yes. I...I didn't want her to die, so I escaped with her."

---

He sighed once again. "And you didn't find Will?"

---

Now it was her turn to sigh. "I didn't find him, but..." She paused. "I heard running footsteps in the woods area. I followed them, hoping it was him..." She was about to say Barbara as well, but it probably wasn't what he wanted to hear. "But then..."

---

He was getting curious. "Then what? You saw a monster?"

---

She scoffed. "Would you believe me if I said I did?"

---

His eyes widened at that. She really did see a monster there? Then if Will was there... "What did it look like? Were you armed?"

---

"It looked...inhuman. It was...faceless, probably, and tall." She shrugged. "I don't know. And I did have a gun, but so did Kali for some reason, so she shot at it, but it seems to be immune to bullets or they don't affect it as much."

---

Hopper rubbed his face again, still trying to process what she said. He had to give Joyce that piece of news then... "You still up to work with me?"

---

She nodded. "Of course, I don't work today, anyway." She then heard him tell her where to meet him, the woman nodding again. "See you

then." She then hung up the phone and walked upstairs to change.

---

He then got out of the booth and got into his car, buckling himself.

"Did you get it?" Joyce asked.

He nodded. "Yeah." She nodded back at him as he looked at her with a surprised look, making her look puzzled.

"Wh-what is it?"

"It's Terry." Her eyes widened. "I just got off the phone with her." They widened more.

"Wh-what...?"

"She was in that hole and she was looking for Will, but then she saw a monster and one of her daughters there, so she escaped with her daughter to make sure she was alright."

Joyce looked utterly shocked at this, smoking her cigarette and opening the window to throw it out. She promised her to find him...

"She'll be with us when we visit Karen, so let's go." He then drove away with her. She was still in shock though. That promise...and it was broken for one of her daughters? She didn't know whether to be mad at her or forgive her...

---

**Done! What do you guys think of it? Any typos or mistakes?**

Okay, so net neutrality is repealed here. However, the vote needs to go through Congress. I hope they repeal it, but if not, then the effects won't come into place until late January, so I'm safe...for now. What I said in the last chapter still applies though.

Anyways, about this chapter...

It was hard for me to choose whether or not Terry escapes the Upside Down. I thought of making her escape because she was



getting weary from traveling around there, looking for Will and Barbara. If she stayed, she would have been killed by the Demogorgon, then and there. I didn't want that to happen, so I made her escape. Hope you guys don't mind that!

Also, to answer phiellydinya, Will IS in the Upside Down, trust me. He did walk through the lights, otherwise, Terry wouldn't follow them in an earlier chapter.

Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter!  
:D

P.S.: I'm thinking of updating this fanfic every other day (in other words, every two days) since it does take me that long to make a chapter in this fanfic. Can't make any promises though!

\*EDITS of 09/23/19:

- Replaced "her" with "their"

- Fixed 3 typos

- Replaced "I need to talk to these two." to "I need to talk to them."

- Changed "That was mostly a lie" to "That was a half-lie"

- Replaced "Maybe" with "Sometimes"

- Changed Jane's outfit a little

- Removed "let out another heavy sigh and"

- Separated a sentence from the paragraph where Hopper gets Karen's address

- Removed the ellipses in "The girl sniffed, wondering what the police chief wanted with her mom."

- Had Terry pause to think about Barbara being the footsteps

- Added "or they don't affect it as much." to "but it seems to be immune to bullets"

## 16. Are You Lost?

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

In Kali's bedroom, Jonathan began waking up in the sleeping bag on the floor. He got out of it and saw Kali, wide awake and sitting on her bed, looking at a book and writing in a notebook. He stood up and sat next to her. "Hey..." he greeted her.

"Hey," she greeted back, not looking at him.

He looked a bit worried at her, asking, "You couldn't sleep?"

She shook her head. "Every time I close my eyes, I see that...that damn monster." She paused. "Wherever the hell I was, wherever the hell Mum was...it must be where it lives. It was feeding on that poor deer there..." She began tapping her pencil on the notebook. "That means if...Will and Barbara..." She trailed off, not wanting to finish her sentence.

He got what she was trying to say, getting closer to her. "Hey." She looked at him. "My mom said she talked to Will. Your mom said that she also heard footsteps. It could be his, or Barbara's. Either way, there's a chance that they're still alive, that Barbara's still alive."

She looked completely worried. "I know, but..." She then looked at him. "That means she and Will are trapped...in that place." She sighed and placed a hand on her face. "My mum should have never left."

Now he looked worried for her. "Kali-"

"I'm serious. She was looking for the both of them and she escaped because of me! She should have stayed to go find them-"

"Kali." She looked at him again, his face serious. "She said she saw that monster multiple times and she escaped death from it more than once. Plus, she said she was getting tired. Do you want to have both Barbara AND her trapped there with that thing?"

She felt her blood run cold from that statement. Her mother could

have died then and there if she hadn't escaped, since she was getting tired as hell. Maybe...maybe it was a good idea for her to escape. She let out another sigh and stated, "We need to find it again."

He nodded a little, but still kept his worried face. "You wanna go back there?"

She shook her head. "No." She then thought of something, making her face light up in realization. "I don't think we have to." Jonathan looked curious. "As I said, it was feeding on that deer there, meaning that it's a predator, right?"

"Right."

She opened the book and pointed to a picture of a coyote. "It seems to hunt at night, like a coyote, but not in packs like one. It's always alone...like a bear." She looked at him. "You've seen Barbara cut herself, right?" He nodded. "And last night, with the deer..."

"It was bleeding too."

She nodded. "Exactly." She then flipped to a page with a shark and pointed at that. "Sharks can detect blood in one part per million. A drop in a million and they smell from a quarter of a mile away."

"So, what you're saying is that it can detect blood?"

She nodded again at him. "It's just a theory, but I think it's true."

He shrugged. "We can test it..." She nodded once again at him.

"Yeah, I think we should. That way, we'll know it's coming."

Now he nodded. "And...you did say last night that the gun was useless against it, so..."

"We'll need to kill it some other way..."

Suddenly, they both heard knocking on the door, making the two look up at it and hear Terry saying, "Kali? Jonathan? Is it alright for me to come in?"

They both looked at each other and nodded, Kali looking at the door and replying, "Yeah, hold on." She got up from the bed and opened the door. Terry was dressed in a pearly pink and white long-sleeved top, dark jeans, and casual heels.

She gave her a smile and asked, "Are you two doing okay?"

Both of them nodded and answered off-sync, "Yeah."

She looked over at the book and notebook in the bed. "What are you two doing?" Her adoptive daughter gestured her to join them, so she did and closed the door before approaching them on the bed. Kali explained her theory to her, making her nod.

"You think it can detect blood?"

She nodded at her. "Yeah. It's just a theory, but I think it's possible." Terry did see that deer it was feeding on with blood. She wondered...if the theory is true...

"Terry! Are ya gettin' Kali or what?!" Becky's faint voice called from downstairs.

She and the teens shot back a little and she replied, "Y-yeah! Hold on!" She then turned to them. "Are you two going to test this theory, or...?"

They both nodded. "Today," Jonathan stated.

"Maybe you can come with us," Kali suggested.

She shook her head and stood up from the bed. "Hopper just called me and said to join him, so I won't be able to." She then gave them a worried look. "Just be careful, you two."

"Of course," they both replied as they nodded once again.

She smiled at the two. "Kali, can you get dressed and have some breakfast before you two leave? Jonathan, you can also eat, if you like."

The auburn-haired guy nodded and said, "Thank you, Ms. Ives." He

stood up from the bed and exited the room with her, closing the door as Kali began changing.

---

Dustin rode to Jane's house and parked his bike near where the basement was. He knocked on the door, Jane looking up and hoping it was Mike. She ran up to it and opened it, seeing Dustin and having that hope disappear. She sighed and greeted in an apathetic voice, "Hey, Dustin."

"Hey, Jane," he greeted back as he went inside and took off his backpack and jacket, placing them on the couch. "Just wanted to see how you were doing."

She sighed again and closed the door, beginning to pace around and now sounding worried. "I just...I can't believe he didn't come back..."

He looked at her and shrugged. "Well, he's gotta be close somewhere."

She began thinking about what the freckled boy said. "H-he said it wasn't safe, that it was dangerous..." She paused. "M-maybe he messed up the compasses to protect us."

Now he sighed. "Jane, calm down, will ya?"

She now looked heartbroken, placing a hand on one of her temples. "I shouldn't have yelled at him. I should have never done that..."

He grabbed her arm to stop her and said to her, "Jane...calm down. It's not your fault, alright?"

She looked at him with a bit of a surprised look, but nodded and replaced it with one with a bit of anger. "Right...it's Lucas's."

He shook his head, shocking her. "Wasn't his either."

She looked baffled at what he said. "It's not HIS fault?!"

He shook his head again. "No."

Her jaw dropped. "So him fighting Mike, that wasn't WAY out of

line?!"

He shook his head once more. "It was, but so was Mike knocking him out like that!" She sighed. "And you were yelling and pushing him before he even fought Mike. You could've fought him too with the look you were having!"

Now she looked appalled at him saying that. "Are you serious?!"

He looked at her with a mad look. "Yes, I am! All three of you were being assholes and I was the only reasonable one!" He then pointed at her. "You shoved him first, so the rule applies."

Her eyes widened. "What?!"

"You know it! You draw first blood!"

She shook her head at him. "No, no! I'm NOT shaking his hand!"

"Yes, you are!"

"No, I'm not!"

"This isn't a discussion, Jane, it's the rule of law! Obey or be banished from the Party! Do you wanna be banished?" She sighed once more. She didn't want to, they were her only friends, so she shook her head, making him nod and calm down a little. "Good." He then got his jacket and put it on before his backpack.

"Where are we going?" the tomboy asked him.

"Where d'ya think? We're gonna get Lucas," he replied as he got her coat and backpack. "Then, we'll find Mike."

"I need to eat breakfast though."

"Do that, then we'll go." He then threw the coat and backpack to her. She caught it and took a deep breath. She hoped that maybe, MAYBE she and Lucas will get along again.

---

*The door suddenly opened on in Mike's room, the boy's eyes shooting open*

*and his breath becoming heavy. He was laying to his side on his bed, holding a stuffed animal he had tightly. The lights turned on and he decided to sit up and look at who entered in. It was no one more than his father and the doctor. He took a deep breath as he set aside his stuffed animal and let his father sit on the bed. He gave him a plant, which he accepted and examined a little. He then looked at his father.*

*"Today is a special day, Michael," he said to him. "Do you know why?" He shook his head at him as a reply, feeling a bit curious and scared.*

*"Today, we make history, Michael Eleven," Dr. Brenner stated to the boy.*

*"H-history..." Mike asked, looking at him for a couple of seconds before looking back at his father.*

*His father nodded at him. "Today, we make contact." He then tapped the tip of his nose with his finger. Contact? With what?*

*Suddenly, he realized what he was talking about.*

---

Mike shot up from the ground, his eyes wide open and him panting. His wig was in his hand and his clothes and face were all dirty. The dried blood from his nose was seen. He looked around, seeing that he was the only person in the woods and hearing only birds chirping. His breathing became steady and he felt a little calm...

But a little sad as well.

...

As he walked around, he approached a large body of water and crouched down to it. He saw the reflection of himself in the water. His wig still in his hand, he put it on and looked at his reflection again. It did look like he actually had a head full of hair. He thought he actually looked cool. However, the thing was getting itchy. That was why he removed it in the first place.

He sighed and took it off, seeing himself without it again. Now he didn't look cool. He didn't think he was ever cool, only with that did it make Jane really like him.

Jane...

He looked at his reflection, feeling despaired. She didn't like him anymore, not to his knowledge. He almost killed Lucas and he made her cry and yell at him...again. His breathing became heavy when he thought about what she yelled to him...

What WAS wrong with him?

He knew.

He knew what was wrong with him.

He looked at his reflection angrily and felt his brain stressing at the thoughts running through his head. Without any thought, he screamed, making the water ripple all across and the birds fly away from the sound of his scream.

---

The whole Ives family, including Jonathan, ate pancakes, all of them being in silence. Kali now had her hair in a single ponytail and wore a lavender tank top, a black denim jacket, dark jeans, and light sneakers. Terry was eating her pancakes at a fast pace, getting the attention of her sister. "You alright, Terry?" she asked her.

She nodded as she chewed and swallowed a bite. "Yeah, I am," she replied.

Becky did want to ask her about what was with Hopper wanting to contact her, but she decided not to do it since the teens and Jane were there.

"I'll be going out grocery-shopping, if you two don't mind," the mother continued.

"Want us to come with you?" asked Carl.

She shook her head. "I'll be fine." He and his wife nodded as they all continued eating. Kali and Jonathan both knew what she was really going to do, but didn't comment on the matter since Becky and Carl probably didn't know. Why should they?



Jane was concerned about her mother eating so quickly, but she went on her word that she was alright. She kept her mind on finding Mike and making peace with Lucas.

---

After breakfast, Jane and Dustin rode their bikes to Lucas's house. They parked their bikes and walked to the door, Dustin ringing the doorbell. After a few seconds, Lucas answered it, wearing a multicolored, long-sleeved shirt and gray sweatpants. He didn't look too thrilled to see them, crossing his arm. "What do you guys want?" he asked them in a bit of a cold tone.

The kids looked at each other, then at Lucas. Jane let out a sigh and said, "I drew first blood by shoving you like that, so..." She extended her hand out for him to shake it. "Truce?"

He just looked at it like it was some foreign object, making her feel a bit nervous...

...

Now inside his home, Jane apologized to Lucas and he paced around, thinking of shaking her hand or not. He stopped when he reached to a conclusion, then faced her and Dustin. "I'll shake," he said, making the tomboy smile a little and extend her hand out. "On one condition." Her smile dropped as he continued, "We forget the weirdo and head straight to the gate."

She looked very disbelieved that he said that, putting her hand down. "No."

"Then I'm not shaking."

She felt annoyed and angry at him now. "Fine!"

"FINE!"

"No, no, NOT fine!" Dustin shouted to the two of them. "Guys, seriously?! Remember when we were on Bloodstone Pass?" Jane and Lucas looked at each other with puzzled looks, not knowing what he was talking about. He sighed when they did that, making them look at him now. "We couldn't agree on which path to take, so we split the

party up and had the trolls take us out, one-by-one. Then everything went to shit and we were all disabled! That's why we need to stick together, no matter what!"

Both thought he was right. "Yeah, that's right," the black-haired boy replied. "But this is the Party, right here, in this room, all of us." He then pointed to his friends and himself.

"Mike too," Jane added.

He shook his head at her, looking baffled that she even said that. "No way! Not even close! He'll NEVER be one of us!" She looked at him with more of an angry face, crossing her arms. He then moved his fingers to count. "He's a LIAR, a TRAITOR-"

"He was just trying to keep us safe, Lucas! What he did to you-i-it was an accident!"

Now he had a look of disbelief on his face. "An ACCIDENT?!"

"Accident or not..." Dustin chimed in, shrugging a little. "It was a little awesome."

Lucas looked dumbfounded at his friend. "WHAT?!"

"He threw you IN THE AIR with his MIND!"

"I could have been KILLED!"

"But that's why we need him!" the tomboy stated in defense. "He's a weapon! He has strong powers! Fighting the Demogorgon with your stupid wrist rocket is the same as R2-D2 going to fight Darth Vader! We're no use to Will if we're dead!"

Lucas was never so pissed off at Jane before, having enough of her shit. He huffed and replied, "If you two want to waste your time finding a traitor, then fine!" Jane and Dustin looked very defeated. "I don't wanna waste MY time on him anymore!" He huffed again and rubbed his nose. "Now, if you two are done, I'm gonna go to the gate and find Will." He then shoved his friends out of the way to go up to his room.

The two watched him go, Jane looking really irritated at how he acted. She thought that it was fine, that she and Dustin might find Mike and then find Will before him...

Maybe.

She sighed. Lucas was her best friend and she was thinking of him in a dim light like this. This never happened between them before. Even Dustin knew that.

---

Mike eventually got to downtown and stopped to see a supermarket across the road. Though he didn't know what that place was, he recognized the words of some foods on the posters hanging from its windows. Curious, he decided to walk to it and walk right in.

He heard some upbeat instrumental music as he went inside. He saw some people stare at him with concerned and weird looks, making him feel a little nervous. He decided to walk right in to get some food. More people stared at him as he walked along. His nervousness began increasing by the more people that looked at him. It almost reminded him of...

---

*In the beige unitard again, Mike held his father's hand and looked around, seeing a bunch of new scientists look at him, even some new men in suits. He felt very nervous about this.*

*"It's okay, Michael," Dr. Wheeler said to him in a reassuring tone. "These people are all friends."*

*"Yes," Dr. Brenner added, being next to the boy. "They are just here to watch, so don't be frightened." The dark-haired boy continued to look at them, still feeling as nervous as he did before.*

*His father saw the look on his face and told him, "Don't focus on them, son. Be in here, like before." He tapped his son's forehead. "Alright?"*

*The nervousness still stuck with him, but he had to get it away, for his father. "Yes, Dad," he responded.*

*As they went up the stairs, the entrance into the bath opened and a man*

*placed the headgear on Mike's head. Dr. Brenner stated, "Remember, whatever you saw, it can't hurt you, M11."*

*"The doctor is correct, son," Dr. Wheeler added, placing a hand on his son's shoulder. "It can't hurt you from here, so you shouldn't be frightened." Michael then went onto the instrument that would bring him down into the water, the doctors being around him.*

*"It's reaching out to you, calling you." The boy gripped on the bars as he looked at his father and the doctor.*

*"Right, it's calling you." His father smiled at him. "So this time, don't turn away from it. Find it, for me and the doctor. Understood?"*

*That thing...he didn't want to see it again, but...his dad and the doctor needed him to. He couldn't disobey them or else...*

*He nodded at them and replied again, "Yes, Dad." The instrument then went down, his body feeling the water. As a breathing mask was put on his head, he was finally submerged into the water and stepped off of the instrument. Instead of having a plain face, he looked as anxious as he could ever be, seeing all the people that looked at him in the bath. As it got up from the water and he placed his hands on the glass, a scientist closed the exterior of the bath, leaving it to be completely dark.*

*...*

*He opened his eyes, seeing that he was in that place again.*

*The place where he saw the monster.*

---

*"Are you lost?" asked an employee, making him break his focus on the flashback and look at him. The man approached to him slowly. "Are your parents here?" Mike only stared at him, not knowing what to say.*

*Another employee, a woman, was near him too and said with a reassuring smile, "A cute little boy like you shouldn't be alone." Now, he looked at her, this time with a perplexed expression. There was that word again..."cute". Since the woman was smiling, it must be a good word. That meant that Jane called him something good*

yesterday.

She did...but then...

"Really, where are your parents?" the woman asked. "Do you have any older siblings, perhaps?"

He was getting a bit annoyed by the two asking him questions, so he replied, "Mouth-breathers." Both employees looked offended by him saying that to them.

He looked forwards again and began walking through the freezer aisle. He spotted a box of Eggos and opened the door. Since they didn't taste bad and Jane liked them, he got two boxes. He then spotted a closed tub of mint ice cream, so he closed the door to the Eggos and walked to the door where the ice cream was kept. He opened that and got two tubs of the ice cream. Both tubs were cold, but he was hungry, so he didn't care.

Meanwhile, the two employees looked at him concernedly, the woman asking, "Uh, what should we do?"

As the boy closed the door, the man answered, "Call the police." They then saw him leave with the waffles and ice cream, making them walk to him to chase him down. "Hey, young man! You should pay for those!" Mike ignored him, continuing to go to the exit of the store.

"Stop, young man!" the woman asked. The dark-haired boy decided to use his powers and pull a woman's cart in front of them to stop them. They managed to walk around that and still chase them down.

"You have to pay for those!" the man shouted.

"Little boy, I demand you stop and give us those!" the woman also shouted.

"Thief! Thief!"

Michael finally exited the shop and used his powers to shut the door to stop them again, the glass breaking and the alarm sounding. With a smirk on his face, he continued to walk into the woods.

---

Terry drove her car and parked at the surprisingly nice-looking home Hopper told her to go to. She saw a green car next to her, seeing not only Hopper, but also...Joyce. The two looked at her, Joyce looking at her intently. The woman sighed, knowing she would have some explaining to do.

As she turned off the engine, the dirty-blond-haired woman unbuckled herself and exited the car, Joyce and Hopper doing so as well. They approached each other, Jim and Terry looking each other in the eye before she darted her eyes to the brown-haired woman's. She frowned at the sight of her looking at her like she needed an answer, so she said, "Joyce-

"L-later, Terry," she replied, cutting her off and holding her hand up.

She sighed and looked up at Hopper. "What's she doing here?" she asked him.

"Helping me investigate, like you," he answered, smoking his cigarette and flicking it to the ground. "Let's go." He walked to the house, the women following. Terry looked at Joyce again, who was crossing her arms and shivering a little from the cold. She sighed, wondering what Joyce was probably thinking since Hopper probably told her about her situation.

They all stopped at the door, the police chief ringing the doorbell. They all heard footsteps, then saw the curtain of the door rise to see a dark-brown-haired man a little above their age look through it for a few seconds. The three adults looked at the man before he dropped the curtains and turned to possibly his sister since they look related, who looked to be in her 30's and possibly two months pregnant, and talked to her a little bit. After another few seconds, the man unlocked the door and opened it, asking, "Can I help you three?"

Hopper nodded, answering, "Yes, is Karen Bertuzzi here? We're looking for her." Terry felt her blood run cold when he said the name. He knew that name...how? Did he...go deeper into the history of Hawkins Lab?

The man looked skeptical at them, his sister now being by his side. "Who are you people and what do you want from my younger sister?"

"I'm the police chief of Hawkins, Jim Hopper." He showed his badge to them. "We'd like to speak to your sister about something in an investigation we're having."

Both him and the woman next to him looked forlorn. That made them all concerned about Karen. "Are you sure it's our little sister?"

The chief nodded. "If your little sister's Karen Bertuzzi, yes."

He sighed, his sister looking somber. He looked at her and whispered, "Do you want to?"

She nodded and turned to the three. "Okay, if you really have to," she answered in a despaired voice. "But she..." She sighed and drew her lips into a line, not finishing her sentence.

The man looked at them and stated, "You all can try and talk to her, but it's not going to be easy...or even possible." He turned around with his sister and walked to where Karen was.

"Honey? Who is it?" asked a different woman from another room.

"It's not one of those girl scouts again, right?" asked a different man.

Hopper and Joyce looked at each other with worried looks, then looked at Terry with the same looks. She looked forlorn as well, a hand on her temple. Both of them figured that she knew her.

"Terry?" the tall man asked, making her look at him. "Do you know what happened to her?"

She nodded before gesturing them to follow Karen's siblings. "Look and find out. It's not pretty." Now they both became very worried. Closing the door behind them, all of them went inside and followed Karen's siblings.

They heard a TV play in a room and in another, they saw another man around their age appear, having blonde hair and facial hair, looking like he was about to go to work. In what was the living room, they saw two more women. One had light-brown hair in a bun, wore female business attire, and was placing a tray in front of the other woman. The other looked beautiful, having shiny curly brown hair

that touched her shoulders. She wore a plain red night gown, a dark denim jacket, and pink slippers and was sitting on a rocking chair, looking at the television and murmuring things under her breath.

The woman's eyes widened when she saw the three adults as well as the suited man's when he entered the room. The brother looked at the two and said, "These people want to talk to Karen for an investigation. If you two will please." They both nodded, the man and the woman exiting the house.

The sister sighed and said to the woman on the chair, "Karrie...some visitors want to talk to you." The woman slowly looked at the three with a face of apathy. She looked at Terry first before looking at Hopper and Joyce. The hazel-eyed woman had wide eyes when she saw her. There she was...after all these years...

Joyce decided to put on a smile and say to her, "Hey there, Karen, I'm Joyce. Joyce Byers." She then pointed at Hopper and Terry. "These two are Hopper and Terry. We drove over from Hawkins." She paused, Karen's apathetic face still looking at her. Her smile dropped. "Um...you see...my son, he's been missing for over a week now and...um...we're all wondering if we could talk to you about your daughter and son, Nancy and Michael? If there's anything you would like to tell us about maybe when they were taken and where...?" Karen didn't answer, worrying both Joyce and Hopper. Terry exhaled deeply, crossing her arms and looking down.

"Can you tell us anything about your ex-husband, Theodore Wheeler?" the police chief asked. "Do you guys still keep in touch?" Karen only blinked, looking down.

The frantic mother gulped and got out a poster of Will, walking towards her and showing it to her. The curly-haired woman did look at it. "Th-this is my son, Will. You may have seen him in the news lately, right?" Karen's eyes stopped looking at the poster and at the TV instead, still having her apathetic face.

Absolutely worried and puzzled, Hopper asked the siblings, "What's wrong with her?"

The brother sighed again and answered, "I told you, it's not easy or



even possible to speak with her..." His sister looked despaired at the sight of Joyce trying to communicate with her younger sibling. Her brother gave her a side hug to her and rubbed her arm.

Hopper then looked at Terry with the same look, the woman looking back at him and mouthing, "Not pretty." Now he needed to know: what the hell happened to her?

---

**Done! How was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes? Sorry for the late update, I just took a road trip with my family to go to Florida for Christmas.**

**Welp, now Karen makes an appearance. I hope you guys don't mind her having to live with two of her siblings, who are obviously OCs like Carl. I'd like to think that she does have siblings because to me, she looks like someone that probably has a couple siblings, so here they are. Two siblings and their spouses, all working to take care of her since she became unable to take care of herself.**

**Also, this episode will go by in two more chapters. I know, weird case, but it's the best solution. I'll also update this every day 'til Christmas. Otherwise, as I said before, I'm planning to update this every 2-3 days since that's how long it takes me to write a chapter of this.**

**Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

**\*EDITS of 10/01/19:**

**-Combined "Jonathan began waking up" with "in the sleeping bag on the floor."**

**-Replaced "said" with "greeted"**

**-Removed "never" in "I shouldn't have yelled at him." and "Now she felt very regretful for what she did."**

**-Capitalized "Party"**

**-Fixed a typo**

**-Removed the ellipses in "He knew what was wrong with him."**

**-Replaced "disappeared" with "dropped"**

-Added "putting her hand down." in "She looked very disbelieved that he said that, putting her hand down." and removed "she replied."

-Connected "Now he needed to know" with "what the hell happened to her?"

## 17. Just The Usual Monster Hunting

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

On the road, Jane and Dustin rode their bikes to look for Mike. Out of nowhere, Dustin stated, "Man, this is weird without Lucas."

"Right?" Jane replied. "He should have shaken my hand."

"He's probably just jealous."

She gave him a weird look. "Jealous of what?"

He shook his head. "Jeez, your obliviousness just blows my mind, Jane." She still looked at him weird, making him sigh. "He's your friend, right?"

"Yeah." She realized what she said and shook her head. Since they weren't good with each other now... "I mean...I don't know."

Dustin sighed again. "It's fine, I get it." She gave him a weird look again. "I didn't get here 'til the fourth grade and he had the advantage of living next door. None of that matters, though." He looked at her for a few seconds. "What really matters is that he's your friend, not a best friend like Will, but you get the memo. Suddenly, this other boy shows up and lives in your basement and you give all of your attention to him."

"What? No, I don't."

"Yes, you do, Jane. It's so obvious. You know it, he knows it." She pouted at him, but knew he was right. She did give all of her attention towards Mike and always wanted to protect him almost always ever since she first met him. "The thing is, no one ever says anything unless yelling and pushing is involved like a bunch of trolls with the IQ of zero. Now, things are weird."

The tomboy sighed, soaking in what her curly-haired friend told her. She thought he had a point. She made her friend mad at her because of another guy she liked. Now that she thought about it...it was

pretty stupid of her to anger him like that. He was a good friend, she didn't want to break ties with him.

She nodded and replied, "Right, he IS my friend." She paused. "But like Will, he's my best friend." She then looked at Dustin. "And so are you."

He scoffed a little at her statement. "Can't have more than one best friend."

She narrowed her eyes at him. "Says who?"

"Says logic."

She clicked her tongue and shook her head at him. "That's a bunch of bull, Dustin. I do think you are my best friend too, just like Lucas and Will."

He did feel a bit happy hearing her say that. Yeah, logic says otherwise, but it was still nice of her to say that about him. "I guess." Both of them smiled at each other.

However, Jane spotted a crime scene at the supermarket, dropping her smile and stopping her bike. The curly-haired boy looked at that as well and stopped too. Both of them looked shocked. "What the..." the curly-haired girl muttered under her breath. She saw two employees talk to two of the police officers and the glass doors broken. Both of them instantly thought of who was behind this, Jane looking at Dustin.

"Do you think..." he asked her.

She nodded. "Definitely." The two nodded at each other as they began riding, hoping to find Mike, no matter what. However, they didn't notice a strange figure from afar seeing them go...

---

Back at the Bertuzzi's, the siblings, who introduced themselves as Nick and Giana, sat with the three adults at the dinner table. "Karen was part of this study in her college," Giana said to them.

"MKUltra?" Hopper asked.

She nodded. "Yeah, that's it."

"Our parents advised her to take it since her then-husband was one of the people leading it," Nick added.

The police chief raised an eyebrow. "When were they married, exactly?"

"When Karen was out of high school. His family and ours were business partners, so his parents and ours arranged a marriage between their oldest and our parents' youngest."

Hopper nodded, Joyce looking a bit nervous and Terry looking like she was listening. "Can any of you tell us anything more about MKUltra?"

Nick looked at Giana, who looked at Hopper again and laced her fingers together. "It started around the 50's. When Karen got involved, they were supposed to ramp down on the drugs, but they got crazier instead." She frowned. "They messed her up pretty bad."

Concerned, Terry looked at the older people and asked, "So, why did your parents advise your sister to take this program?"

The older brother shrugged while the sister sighed. "They didn't know much about it, just what her ex-husband told them."

Terry muttered inaudibly, "Figures."

"Nick and I were the only ones that truly knew about it," Giana added.

"And it was the CIA that ran this?" Hopper questioned.

The woman nodded. "Yes. They'd pay her a few hundred dollars to not just my younger sister, but to people like her, then give her and them some drugs...like LSD." Hopper and Joyce looked at Terry, who slightly nodded, confirming that fact. Both looked aghast before looking back at Karen's sister. "After that, they make her go naked and get into these...isolation tanks, they called it."

"Isolation tanks?" Joyce asked. "D-do you know what they are?"

"From what we've been told, they're like these giant bathtubs that are vertical," Nick replied as he spread his hands out to show the size. "They're filled with salt water to make you float and lose your senses. You know, sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound? They make you lose all of that and you feel nothing, see nothing. They did that to...what was it?" He turned to Giana for help.

She shrugged. "Expand the boundaries of the mind? Something like that." She let out a deep sigh. "It's like the hippies all over again." She then shook her head and waved her hand to them. "Not that she was coerced into doing this. She willingly did so, she told me and Nick." Terry was skeptical of that statement, but didn't blame her for believing it.

"But then..." Giana continued. "She had no idea that at the time that...she was pregnant. First, there was Nancy and we all thought she was alright, but then..."

"Karen was pregnant with Michael about four years later," Nick finished for her. "She didn't know about that either."

The three looked at each other, Hopper and Joyce with shocked faces and Terry with a look of confirmation. They all looked at the siblings, Joyce asking, "Are there any pictures of him or Nancy you can show us?"

The siblings looked at each other, then looked distraught at the three. "I mean...we have pictures of Nancy, but Michael..." Giana answered, looking like she was going to cry. The man hugged her as she answered, "He..." She then cleared her throat. "Karen miscarried him in the third trimester."

Hopper's and Joyce's eyes widened in shock. "A-and where's Nancy?"

"She ran away," Nick replied solemnly. "Found her dead body in the woods in Hawkins a few days later."

Again, Hopper and Joyce gave Terry aghast looks and she confirmed it with just one look. They couldn't believe she was involved in a project like that, using drugs and lying about what happens to those in the project, especially with Michael and Nancy. Hopper did

remember seeing Nancy's dead body in a file of earlier case now, but with the look Terry had, it was as real as 'Will's'.

The ex-Labs employee looked very unhappy to see the siblings so miserable about this. Even she couldn't believe she even had the audacity to even work in the project. She didn't do anything for harm, but still...

...

When Nick left for work, Giana had the three walk upstairs to follow her to Nancy's room first. She opened the door and revealed a soft pink room with a tidied bed and a few stuffed animals. She had other white and pink furniture all over and some pictures of her on top of a drawer. Giana walked to them, making the three follow. "Here she was, before she died," she said as she got out of the way to have them look at the pictures.

All of the pictures had a little girl with pearly skin and sky-blue eyes at different ages. Despite that, she had light-brown wavy hair, short in one, long in others. She was smiling in most of them, being an innocent and cute little girl.

Hell, she probably was.

"Karen would always keep this room tidy in remembrance of how Nancy kept it," Giana added. "Surprising, since she was only four."

Now Terry remembered her. She had seen her with Ted around the facility sometimes. She even observed her at one point...

...

Finally, the short-haired woman opened the door to what was supposed to be Michael's room. It was a sky-blue and had clouds and pictures of animals on the walls. There was even a baby carriage, blue and white, with a mobile on it, playing a lullaby. "Karen made this room all by herself," she stated to them. "Nick and I asked her if she needed help, but she denied it. Ever since she...miscarried, she kept all of this up, thinking that her baby boy would come back." She sighed once more and sat on the chair. "She even thinks that her little

girl will come back too, but..." She shrugged, looking solemn. "She...she just couldn't accept the fact that she's lost two of her own children."

Terry knew why she would deny it and the two others figured the same thing. Giana continued, "Karen...likes to pretend that Michael is real and he and Nancy are both still alive. That's why she thinks the both of them will come home someday." The three faced her. "She thinks that her children are special, born with these 'abilities'."

"A-abilities?" Joyce asked.

She nodded. "It's like in a horror novel, like what Stephen King would write."

"Wh-what kinds of abilities?"

"Telepathy and telekinesis for Michael and making you see things that aren't there for Nancy, the powers of the mind. That was why she thought that Ted and his co-worker, Brenner, I believe his name was, took them." Giana sighed once again, looking away from them. "All of the doctors say it's a coping mechanism to...deal with the guilt of losing her children."

Joyce and Hopper kept their shocked looks while Terry still looked disheartened by all of this. "A-are you sure about Michael?" The woman gave her a puzzled look. "About her having him."

She nodded. "Absolutely. There was no birth certificate and the staff all confirmed to us that she miscarried." She gave them a concerned look when their faces amplified in their expressions. "Are you three alright?"

"Yeah," they all answered off-sync, nodding.

"It's just that..." the dirty-blond-haired woman began before kneeling before Giana and holding her hands. "I am so sorry that these things happened to your family." The other woman began frowning and looking like she was going to cry. "Having your younger sister be messed up by drugs, her children dead and gone, her having these coping mechanisms, and...how she is now. I am so sorry that this all



had to happen to your family, Giana."

The woman began to sniffle, her eyes tearing up. "Thank you for your condolences, m'am," she replied in a creaky voice. "It has been pretty hard on us all: me, Nick, Mom, Dad...everyone. We're still coping." Terry nodded in understanding, feeling even more guilty about being involved in the project.

Both Hopper and Joyce felt terrible for not only Giana, but the whole family. Terry had a lot to answer for though...

---

In a hunting store downtown, Jonathan and Kali looked for the things they need to test out their theory. Jonathan grabbed a gasoline can while Kali grabbed some nails and a hammer. She put them in a hard shopping bag she had. As the auburn-haired guy joined her, she spotted a couple of bear traps. He also took a look of those as well. Both looked at each other and grinned, thinking of the same thing at the moment.

...

They placed all of the items they had on the buying counter, concerning the cashier a little since they were both, well, young. As the dark-haired girl finished placing all of their supplies, Jonathan asked, "And can I have four boxes of .38s?"

The cashier did grab four boxes of the ammo and placed them with the rest of the supplies and then asked, "What're you kids doin' with all this?"

The teenage guy didn't know what to say, but Kali quickly thought up of something. "Oh, just the usual monster hunting," she replied in a witty tone. He looked at her with a puzzled look.

The man chuckled a little and replied, "Alright..." He then started checking out the supplies.

...

Exiting the store and going to Jonathan's car, Kali held two plastic bags while Jonathan carried a box. They were both grinning. "Just

the usual monster hunting?" he repeated, sounding amused.

"Had to make it sound stupid somehow," she replied as he used a finger to open up his trunk. Deciding to make more conversation with him, she continued, "Last week, I was shopping for a new top I thought Steve might like." He looked at her as he set the box in the trunk and she chuckled. "Guess what? Took me the whole weekend."

He chuckled as well. "All weekend?"

She nodded as she set the plastic bags inside the trunk. "Yep. Back then, it seemed like life or death. Now..."

He grinned again as he began closing the trunk. "You're shopping for traps with Jonathan Byers."

She grinned back at him. "Definitely."

He finally closed the trunk. "Weirdest part? Is it me or the traps?"

She raised an eyebrow at him. "You, no competition." They both laughed together for a bit before it died off. The auburn-haired teen decided to say something he was meaning to say to her.

"Kali?"

She nodded. "Yeah?"

He took a deep breath and said, "I wanted to say that I'm sorry for yesterday. What I said about that picture being good, I take back. It wasn't good for me to take your photo like that. And when I said you weren't attractive, I take that back too." She looked a bit surprised that he was talking about that. "I didn't mean it like that. It's just..." He shrugged. "I'm just not interested in you, in dating terms, you know?"

She understood that, smiling a little. "I'm glad the feeling's mutual, Jonathan."

He scoffed, keeping his smile and sitting on the hood. "You're not interested in me either?"

She shook her head and joined him. "No way. Not that you're ugly, but I wouldn't date you if I was dared to."

He laughed. "I wouldn't date you if I had a gun to my head."

She laughed with him before her smile disappeared a little. "I'm also sorry for yesterday. I was being a bit of a bitch back there."

His smile also disappeared a little. "You were." Suddenly, Kali got hit by some deja-vu.

"Just...didn't mean to upset you like that. I can get pretty defensive."

He nodded. "I'm sure."

She playfully hit him on the shoulder, making him laugh a little. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Before he could answer, a car honk broke the playfulness between them and made them look at the car the honk came from. "Hey, Kali!" shouted a teen from the car. "Can't wait to see your movie!" He and another teen laughed as they drove off.

The two friends were left perplexed, wondering what the hell they were talking about. "What was that?" Jonathan asked.

"I don't know..." she replied before thinking of why that may have happened. She got off of the trunk and walked to the passenger's seat. "Drive to the theater."

Her guy friend got off the trunk as well and looked more puzzled. "Why?"

"Just do it."

He held his hands up in defeat. "Okay." They both entered into the car.

...

Jonathan drove to the theater and stopped the engine. Both got out and saw words graffitied under "ALL THE RIGHT MOVES". They read,

"STARRING KALI THE INDIAN SLUT IVES". Kali looked absolutely mortified about this. Who the hell did that?!

"Jesus..." Jonathan muttered.

The black-haired girl looked and saw a teen giving her a sneering look. She then heard hissing, sounding like it came from a spray can, and a laugh. She looked at the direction it came from, now looking furious as she stormed to the location. The auburn-haired teen followed her, shouting, "Wait, Kali!"

She entered into an alleyway and saw Tommy H. the spray painter, Carol, Nicole, and Steve. She immediately stormed to them, specifically Steve. Carol was the first to notice her, grinning and saying, "Hey there, Indian princess!"

Everyone else looked at her, Tommy grinning as well. "Uh oh, she looks upset," he said.

When she finally approached Steve, she slapped him in the face as hard as she could, leaving a red mark. The rest of his friends exclaimed in surprise. "What the hell is wrong with you, Steve?" she asked very coldly.

He scoffed and looked at her. "The hell's wrong with *me*? The hell's wrong with *YOU*?" he asked bitterly. "I was worried about you, Kali." He shook his head and sighed, looking away from her for a second. "Can't believe I was actually worried about you."

She crossed her arms and kept her furious look. "What are you talking about?"

"I wouldn't lie if I were you," Carol said to her. "You don't want to be known as the lying Indian slut now, do you?"

She looked both angry and puzzled. "I seriously don't know what the hell you're talking about."

"Oh, and look who it is," Tommy stated as they all looked to see Jonathan enter the scene. Kali figured out why this was happening and turned back to the jock.

"You came by last night?" she asked him. He didn't answer, but the face he made did for him. She stepped closer to him and stated coldly and sarcastically, "Oh, right. Just because I had another guy in my house, that TOTALLY meant I slept with him."

He gave her a skeptical look. "What? You're telling me you brought him over to... 'study'?"

She shook her head. "No."

"Or for another pervy photo session?" the freckled guy added.

"Hell no! He was just-"

"He was just what? Finish that sentence." She paused for a second, trying to come up with something to tell him. "Finish. That. Sentence."

She scoffed at him, raising her eyebrows up and pointing back at Jonathan with her thumb. "He was just visiting over to talk to my mum about his mum and his little brother and even tried to talk to Jane. Hell, he even tried to calm me down when I was thinking about Barbara! That was what you saw through that window, not what you thought you saw!" Steve looked a little surprised that she managed to actually finish that sentence as well as Jonathan, who was actually surprised that she managed to come up with a lie within a few seconds. "Besides, my mum, my aunt, my uncle, they were there. What, do YOU like to sleep with a girl while your parents are around?"

He shook his head and scoffed again. "No-"

"Then why the hell did you think I slept with him?! Only an idiot would think I slept with him that night!" Steve didn't answer, looking pretty dumbfounded at what she was saying. She stepped even more closer to him. "I need an answer, Steve."

"Daaaamn, the Indian princess is getting ice-cold on your ass!" Tommy stated in an amused tone.

"Shut up, Tommy."

Steve still couldn't answer, feeling defeated, actually. He didn't know the adults were there in the house with her and Jonathan was touching her, so...he just assumed...

She shrugged her shoulder and muttered, "Go to hell, Steve. The rest of your friends can join you too." She then turned around and began walking away, gesturing her auburn-haired friend to come along with her. "Come on, Jonathan. Let's go." Surprised at what Kali has done, he nodded and began walking away with her.

Steve looked at him angrily. It was all because of him that she was mad at him, right? Without a second thought, he walked to him and began pushing him, startling him. "Ya know what, Byers?" he said to him. "I always thought you were a queer, but I guess you're a screw-up like your father was."

Kali looked back at him and looked furious again. "Steve, stop," she demanded him coldly.

He continued though, "That house is full of screw-ups, so I shouldn't be surprised."

Jonathan also looked furious, stopping and breathing heavily. Kali stopped as well and placed a hand on his shoulder. "Jonathan, just ignore him. He's just trying to make you mad."

"I mean, there's your mom," Steve went on. "And your little brother?" He scoffed once more. "I'm not even a little bit surprised." Kali looked appalled at what he said. "Sorry I have to be the one to tell you that."

"Steve, you son of a..." Kali muttered, still in disbelief that he even said that.

He pushed Jonathan again, making him more angrier. "The Byers, the entire family, they're an entire disgrace to the-" Kali wanted to slap him again, but Jonathan instantly turned to him and threw a punch on his face. He staggered to the side of the wall, his friends looking shocked. He turned to him and tackled him, beginning to fight him. Kali looked absolutely shocked.

"Steve!" she exclaimed.

Tommy, Carol, and Nicole were cheering him on as he tried to punch him in the face. "Kick his ass, man!" Tommy shouted.

"Stop, you guys!" The two guys then stood up, Tommy trying to fight Jonathan before Steve shooed him off. Jonathan threw another punch, but Steve dodged it and punched him. He was a little stunned, but managed to land another punch on his face. He landed another, knocking him to the ground. He got on top of him and punched him some more. Now Kali wanted Jonathan to stop. "Jonathan, stop it!" She walked to him and tried to pull him off. "That's enough, now let's go!"

"Dude, stop!" Tommy yelled at him, also trying to pull him off before he got shoved away by him.

Suddenly, a cop car appeared in the alleyway and stopped, two police officers came out of it. Carol and Nicole began to run away while Tommy exclaimed, "Shit, the cops!"

Officer Callahan ran to Jonathan severely hurting Steve and shouted, "Hey, kid! Enough's enough!" He tried to pull him off, but without a thought, he punched him back against Steve's car, making him scream a little. "Ah, my nose!"

Officer Powell was the one to finally pull him off of Steve. Tommy supported him up and began running away from the cops, Callahan shouting at them and chasing them down. The older officer bent Jonathan over against the cop car and handcuffed him. "I got this one!" he shouted to his fellow officer.

Kali looked absolutely mortified about all of this, putting her hands on her temples, sighing, and frowning. This turned into more of a shit show than she ever thought it could...

---

**Done! What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed? How did I handle the scenes with the siblings?**

**I liked writing Kali and Jonathan's conversation, just think it's a bit cute that they're apologizing for the day before, but in a more friendlier way. I also made Kali actually respond to Steve**

because I think that's close to how she would react in canon.

Also, did I say I would update 'til Christmas? I meant Christmas Eve. Sorry! I'll be busy on Christmas since there's gonna be a party for my family to celebrate it.

Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter!

\*EDITS of 10/19/19:

-Removed ", referring to the suited man that left the house" 'cause that makes no sense

-Added "in a file of" in "Hopper did remember seeing Nancy's dead body in a file of earlier case now,"

-Replaced "to his" to "for" in "When Nick left for work,"

-Removed "I'm the same with you."

-Fixed a typo



## 18. He's Our Friend And He's Crazy!

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

In the Bertuzzi home, the three began to leave, but not before Joyce and Terry looked at Karen once more, who was still staring at the TV and murmuring things under her breath. Seeing her like this made Terry's heart drop while it made Joyce think of a couple of things. "Thank you for your time," Hopper said to Giana. "We appreciate it."

"I'm sorry that I couldn't be of more help," Giana said. "But good luck in your investigation." She opened the door for him and the women to get out.

"Thank you," the police chief responded.

...

After going to their cars, Terry sighed and leaned against Hopper's. "Alright, hit me," she told the two other adults. "What questions do you guys have?"

Hopper let out a sigh, pulling a pack of cigarettes and pulling one out to smoke from. "Where do I even begin...?" he muttered to himself.

Joyce decided to ask the first question. "Wh-what really happened to Karen, Terry? Do you know?"

She sighed and crossed her arms, not giving either of them eye contact. "What would've happened to me if Martin didn't give me a second chance," she answered, shocking the two adults. "They scramble your brains with shock therapy, making it impossible for you to speak about anything."

Their eyes widened. "Shock therapy?" Joyce's voice became a mere whisper.

"Less like therapy and more like torture."

Since she mentioned Brenner, Hopper figured that she was caught.

"And what do you mean if Brenner didn't give you a second chance?" he asked her.

She looked at him solemnly. "I was caught and put into an interrogation room with him. Instead of scrambling my brains, he tried to trap me in that hole by sending me in there." She looked away from him. "If he knows I escaped..."

Their eyes widened again. "You'll be like Karen..." She nodded as a reply.

"Worst-case scenario, so would you and Joyce." Both looked aghast at that statement. They were crazy sons of bitches, after all...

Hopper smoked a little and asked, "Also, do you really know what happened to Michael and Nancy? We didn't see any kids in that facility."

She shrugged. "I don't know about Nancy, but Michael...remember the drawing we saw?" He nodded.

"Showed the doctors and some kid named M11..." He trailed off as he just realized something. M11...Michael started with an 'M'. "You don't mean..."

She nodded. "That's Michael, M11." Shocked faces amplified. "She was right about him having telepathy and telekinesis. He used it when he was just a young boy, about two. I've seen it." She then remembered a young little boy with dark hair and freckles carrying a block up with just his mind. That was Michael, from the last she had seen him.

"Okay, Terry, listen to me." The woman focused on him. "I think he was at Benny's five days ago."

She looked puzzled. "What? How can that be? The labs have tight security..." She trailed off, thinking about the possibility that...maybe he did escape. Nancy too, probably. She sure as hell didn't see them anywhere in the labs...

"Not tight enough, I bet."

Suddenly, she jolted at the static noise coming from the car. *"Hey, Chief, you there?"* asked Officer Callahan. Hopper heard that and got into his car to answer it. While he was doing that, Terry looked at Joyce again. She still felt guilty about breaking her promise to escape with her daughter. The two glanced at each other, not saying a word to one another, though both were thinking about the promise.

Breaking the silence, Terry stated, "Joyce, I'm sorry." The woman gave her a bit of a puzzled look. "I'm sorry I escaped and didn't find your son." Now Joyce knew what she was talking about, her eyes widening a little. "It's just that...my daughters are very special to me. Kali is no exception. I had to make sure she was alright, that I didn't lose her. That costed the promise and I'm so sorry." She sighed and frowned, shaking her head. "I'm so sorry, Joyce. I know how much Will means to you."

Joyce took a deep breath. She had already made her conclusion about what she thought about that, so she opened her mouth to tell her what she thought. Suddenly, Hopper got out of the car and told them both, "We need to go. Terry too."

The two women looked at him with slightly confused looks. "What?" Terry questioned.

"Jonathan got into a fight and Kali was with him." Both of their eyes widened at that piece of news, especially Terry's. How the hell...? She thought they were going to go test out their blood theory...

---

In the labs, Dr. Wheeler and Dr. Brenner were walking around, hoping to hear about the news of M11 and the secret and where they could be. A scientist approached them with a rather scared expression and said, "Dr. Brenner, Dr. Wheeler, we have a problem."

Both of them stopped and looked at him with puzzled faces. "What do you mean?" asked Dr. Wheeler.

"It's about Teresa. She escaped." Both doctors looked shocked at this piece of news, especially Brenner.

"That's impossible," he stated in disbelief. "There is no way she could

have escaped without us noticing."

"My team and I believe that there was an exit created by the creature and that she found and got out through there. Communications heard a phone call of somebody finding one of our hazmat suits in the woods and another between her and the police chief." Ted sighed and shook his head while Martin just looked so baffled. He never knew the woman would be that clever...

"I told you, we should have had her go through shock therapy instead of trapping her in the hole," the man with the glasses said, turning to his fellow doctor. "Now she's becoming more trouble than needed."

The white-haired man placed a hand on his chin. Honestly, giving Terry a second chance just so she could die was the biggest mistake Brenner made in his entire life. He felt it was actually pretty naive of him to think that she would actually die there and not escape. The woman was smart, that was why he married her and hired her in the first place.

He thought about what to do about her and came to a conclusion, looking at his friend. "Send an order to locate and neutralize her," he said to him. "That woman doesn't have any more reason to keep living on with what she has done."

Dr. Wheeler smiled at him a little and nodded. "No problem, Martin." He smiled back at him, crossing his arms. It was like he and Ted were one mind.

...

A number of agents armed themselves up and went into a van disguised as an electronic repair vehicle. They drove away to look for the woman.

...

From afar, Lucas was on a tree, wearing his camouflage bandanna and black streaks on his cheeks. He saw the vehicle leave, wondering why it was...

---

In the station, Kali was waiting to get a bag of ice from Flo. The woman got out ice from a freezer and placed them in a bag. "So, will we get out of here?" the teen girl asked her.

"You, yes," she answered. "Him, no. He assaulted a police officer."

"How long will he be out?"

"You and him have big plans, do you?"

She thought about answering with the 'monster-hunting' answer, but they were in trouble. It'd be more trouble if he even mentioned hunting, so she didn't answer.

"Here." Flo handed her the bag, making her nod and say her thanks before exiting the room.

She sat next to a cuffed and solemn Jonathan Byers and said, "I have some ice, Jonathan."

He nodded and replied in a serious tone, "Thanks." She slowly pressed the ice against his cheek, him tensing up a little before easing. He let out a deep sigh and looked at Kali, keeping his solemn face. "I'm sorry, I just...I just snapped, didn't think twice, you know?"

She also let out a sigh. "He's an asshole, telling you all of that."

He nodded again at her. "Yeah, definitely. I don't really see what you see in him."

She initially dated him because he was hot and a good flirter. That was it, a shallow reason. Now, look where that got her. She shook her head and stated, "Me neither, to be honest with you." He was kind of surprised that she answered it that way. Well, that was teenage romance, he supposed...

---

In the woods, Michael almost finished the Eggos boxes while emptying one tub of mint ice cream and was halfway done with the other. That ice cream tasted good, despite them being cold like the weather. The waffles tasted weird when cold, but they still tasted good.

As he got out the last one, he felt his stomach being weird. It was like he was full and...not supposed to eat nearly two tubs of ice cream and almost two entire boxes of waffles in one sitting. He was a little anxious about the feeling in his stomach, looking at the last waffle. He thought of when Jane offered him one of these. It was warmer and softer. He frowned, thinking about the curly-haired girl as he looked at the waffle.

Maybe...maybe she'll forgive him? She did once...but that was because he channeled Will. Maybe he'll try to find him again? Then Jane would have to like him again...

But he almost killed her friend...she was really mad at him for doing that...

He sighed, looking sad. She'll never forgive him...she'll never-

"Mike!" shouted...Jane's voice from afar. His eyes widened as he stood up and looked at the direction that came from.

"Michael!" shouted Dustin too. He smiled a little, liking that they were calling for him.

Especially Jane.

He put the last waffle in the pocket of his coat and began walking quickly to their voices.

...

Off their bikes, Jane and Dustin roamed around the woods, calling out Mike's name. They both suddenly heard leaves cracking, stopping and looking around. "Did you hear that?" the tomboy asked her friend quietly.

"Yeah..." her friend replied. Both continued looking around, hoping that the sound belonged to Michael.

"Mike?!" Jane and Dustin called out at the same time.

Unfortunately, who they saw weren't him, but Troy and James, who were storming towards them angrily. Both of them looked scared.

"Hey there, Tranny," Troy greeted in a furious manner as he got out his pocket knife. "Toothless."

Both of them let go of their bikes in horror. "Shit! Jane! Run!" Dustin exclaimed as he and his female friend began running away from them as fast as they could. The bullies began chasing them as fast as they could as well.

...

For God knows how many minutes, the two were still running and were at the quarry. Dustin staggered a bit, crying out, "Cramp!" He held his side as he slowed his run.

"Just keep going, Dustin!" Jane shouted out as he continued running away. Troy was catching up to them and James popped out in the other direction to stop them.

They both instantly stopped, Jane grabbing a rock and Dustin grabbing a stick, both defending themselves. "St-stay back!" she yelled at them. "Don't come any closer!" They were taking baby steps closer to them, so Jane threw her rock at James, which missed by a lot.

He chuckled and commented, "You still throw like a girl, Tranny!" She looked mad that it didn't hit him.

Dustin let out a yell and swung his stick at Troy like a sword. The bully dodged it, however, and put him in a headlock, the blade of his pocket knife hovering under his chin.

Jane looked aghast and exclaimed, "Dustin!"

"Get off! Get off me!" the curly-haired boy shrieked in horror.

Now she looked at him angrily and yelled, "Let him go, Troy! Let him go!"

As she took a step forward, he yelled back, "Don't go any closer or I'll cut him!"

She clenched her fists, stopping where she was. "What do you want?!"

"I wanna know how you did it!"

"Did what?!"

"Some nerdy science shit that made me do that!"

"What, pee yourself?!" He gave her a sharp glare.

"O-our friend had superpowers and he squeezed your bladder with his mind," Dustin stated, still sounding horrified.

"Shut up!" James yelled as Troy had his pocket knife closer to Dustin's neck.

"Maybe I should remove Toothless's baby teeth to save him a trip to the dentist," Troy suggested, making Jane even more fearful and angry.

"NO! Let him go!"

"Sure, I'll let him go! But first...since you embarrassed me, you'll pay a price." Jane felt stiff as he tilted his head toward the edge of the cliff. "Jump, or your friend gets his baby teeth removed." The knife got closer to Dustin's mouth, terrifying him even more. Jane didn't know what to do. She didn't want to jump to her death, but she didn't want Dustin to suffer...

"D-don't do it, Jane!" her friend said to her in a horrified tone. "I-I can live without my baby teeth!"

"I'll cut him right now, Tranny!" The knife got closer, making him whimper. She looked like she was about to cry. "Dentist's office opens in 5...!" She was in a state of panic. What the hell was she going to do?!

"4...3..." She didn't want Dustin to get severely hurt...

"2.." She'd die before that happens.

James, surprisingly looking worried, shouted to his friend, "Troy, wait!"



As Troy shouted one, she instantly ran to the edge of the cliff and leaped off of it, screaming and disappearing from the boys' sights. All of them looked horrified as Troy let go of a distraught Dustin. The brunette bully just realized what he did.

He made a girl kill herself. It didn't matter if she looked like a boy...

Oh shit.

All of them ran to the edge to see if she hit the water, but...she didn't. In fact, she wasn't even near the water. Probably halfway there, from the looks of it. She wasn't falling...it was like...

She was floating in midair.

Even the tomboy was surprised by this. She saw the distance between her and the water with wide eyes, panting in utter shock and her heart beating very fast. She couldn't believe this. She was floating in midair. How could this...

She suddenly felt herself floating back up onto the cliff, screaming a little. "Wh-what?!" she exclaimed. "Whoa, whoa, whoa!" The boys watched her float up and back on the ground on her feet. All of them were baffled at this, including her. How the...?

She turned to see who pulled her up from her death like that, looking very surprised. The boys looked at him too.

It was Michael, his head tilted down and his eyes on the bullies as he began to approach them. He looked at them coldly. Both Jane and Dustin began smiling at the sight of him. He was back...he was actually back.

"Who the hell are you?!" James cried out as he and Troy were about to run at him. However, the freckled boy used his power to push back the taller bully into the bushes. Both him and Troy looked shocked. He then looked at Troy's arm and tilted his head to his left. A bone snapping was heard and he screamed, dropping his pocket knife and trying to hold it.

"He broke my arm!" he yelled out in utter pain.

Mike stopped in his tracks, his nose bleeding from both nostrils. He still kept his cold look at the bullies as he sharply said, "Go."

Terrified of him, the bullies stood up and began running away, Troy yelling, "L-let's get outta here!"

"Go! Go!" James also yelled out.

Keeping his smile, Dustin turned to them and shouted from the top of his lungs, "Yeah! You better run! You know why?!" He pointed at the boy with the shaved head while Jane stood up, keeping her smile as she saw the two run away. "He's our friend and he's crazy! Come back here and he'll kill you! You hear me?! He'll kill you sons of bitches!"

Mike now felt very weakened. Not only from the use of his powers, but also from his stomach due to the ice cream and waffles. Without warning, he fell to the ground limply.

---

*In that dark place, Mike looked around, feeling very scared about finding this creature. He took a deep breath. He had to be brave, for his father and the doctor...otherwise...*

*He heard growling and chomping from afar, making him look to see the monster from far away. His breathing became heavy as he turned towards the direction it was in. He had to be brave...he had to be...*

*He slowly took steps towards the monster. The closer he got to it, the more anxious he became. He clearly saw it feeding on some sort of large egg. When he finally got close to it, he stopped. He may have not seen its face yet, but its look was scaring him already. He really did hope the two doctors were right about it not harming him...*

*He slowly had one finger going towards its back to touch it. It was shaking-actually, he was shaking in much fear about what may happen. His finger as a mere centimeter away from the creature. He gulped, not moving for a minute and panting unevenly. What if it can harm him? What if he dies from it?*

*Seriously, he hoped the men were right.*

*He finally poked it, causing it to instantly turn towards him and open its*

*mouth to scream at his face. He could see all of its sharp teeth and its mouth...*

*It terrified him to hell.*

...

*His eyes shot open, his nose and ears bleeding, as he looked absolutely horrified and screamed from the top of his lungs.*

...

*In the bunker, the lights were flickering on and off and the waves shown on the paper were getting crazy. Michael's scream could be heard from the speakers down there as the wall suddenly began to break open. Everyone near it instantly tried to run away from it. Dr. Wheeler and Dr. Brenner were absolutely awed at the sight of the walls cracking.*

---

"Mike!" Jane shouted to him worriedly, nudging him to wake him up. "Michael! Are you okay?!" He did begin to move and he looked at her, making her smile in relief. However, he looked very sad and began to cry, making her smile drop. "Mike?"

"Jane...I'm sorry..." he said in a sob.

She gave him a perplexed look. "Sorry? Sorry for what?"

He sniffled. "Th-the gate...I opened it...I'm the monster, Jane."

Surprisingly to him, she gave him a reassuring smile and shook her head. "No, Mike. You're not the monster." She then held his hand with both of her's. "You saved me. Please understand that, Mike. You saved me." That made him smile a little and feel so much better than he did before. She forgave him. She actually forgave him. That was all he needed. Her forgiveness.

She pulled him up and gave him a tight and warm hug, in which he returned. Dustin, who was in the background and observing all of this, smiled as well and hugged the both of them. The three stayed in that position for what felt like an hour. They didn't care though. Mike was back and they were all safe. They were back together again.

---

The three kids began walking back to Jane's house, Jane and Dustin having their bikes back. They didn't notice that someone was watching them from a certain van from a certain distance...

The man in the van got out a walkie-talkie and said into it, "The children are in my sight now. They're heading home, to Teresa's home."

---

Every agent in the facility that wasn't looking for Terry armed themselves with weapons and went outside with Dr. Brenner and Dr. Wheeler. Both doctors got inside a van, Ted on the wheel and Brenner on the passenger's seat.

As the men buckled themselves up, Dr. Wheeler stated, "Michael being in Teresa's home...this isn't a mere coincidence."

His comrade nodded. "You have read my mind, Ted." If she did find him and hid him in her home...well, she'll be rid of today. She won't be a problem anymore. He just knew it.

They then began to leave, finally going to the Ives home.

...

Lucas saw the array of vans leaving, making him feel more worried about this. What if they...knew about Michael? Jane did mention that bad people were after him...

---

They finally went behind Jane's house and entered inside. Mike, before entering in, took a quick look around to make sure no one was following them. When he saw nobody, he finally got in and closed the door behind him.

---

**Done! What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I may have missed?**

**Will Joyce forgive Terry or no? Hmm...**

I actually liked writing the scene in the quarry because to me, it was a bit of an intense moment since the kids were in danger (not as much danger as the next two episodes, let me tell you...). I absolutely loved the moment when the three hugged, just... makes me smile so much. I had a joy writing that out.

Keep supporting this fanfic and Merry Christmas! If you don't celebrate that, then Happy Holidays! I'll see you guys on the next chapter!

\*EDITS of 11/20/19:

-Removed the ellipses in "The woman was smart, that was why he married her and hired her in the first place." and "It was like he and Ted were one mind."

-Removed "leaving" in "He saw the vehicle leave, wondering why it was..."

-Replaced "said" with "replied" in "He nodded and replied in a serious tone,"

-Added "and a good flirter" in "She initially dated him because he was hot and a good flirter."

-Had Mike be halfway done with one tub of ice cream

-Removed the ellipses in "He smiled a little, liking that they were calling for him."

-Replaced "it's like..." with "it was like..." and "screamed" with "yelled" in "he yelled out in utter pain."

-Replaced "Its mouth" with "It" in "It terrified him to hell."

## 19. D-did You Guys See That?

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

In the bathroom in the basement, Jane wiped off the dirt off of Mike's face with a washcloth. When she was done, she put the cloth away and smiled at him. "That's better," she said to him. "You look more clean." He then looked at himself in the mirror. He did look cleaner. He frowned, however, when he realized that he didn't have the wig on him. He placed his hand on top of his shaved head, wishing that he had it since Jane liked it.

She shook her head at him and stated, "You don't need it, Mike."

He was a little surprised that she said that, making him feel better. He turned to her and asked, "Still cool?"

She smiled at him again and nodded. "Yeah, still cool."

He smiled a little and added, "Still cute?" Since it was a good word...

She gasped a little, her face heating up and her heart beating faster when he asked that question. She guessed he was still curious about that word...since he caught that and all. She slowly nodded at him. "Y-yeah...still cute...really cute..." She couldn't believe she just said that, but Mike's smile grew, so she couldn't be too embarrassed about it. He looked back at the mirror, smiling and feeling much better about himself than before.

Jane wanted to get this off of her chest, so she asked, "Mike?"

The freckled boy turned to her. "Yes?"

"I, um...I'm glad you're back home."

He nodded at her. "Me too." He then remembered something. He dug into the pocket of his coat and gave her the last waffle he was going to eat. The tomboy looked surprised. "Here...it's an Eggos waffle...your favorite."

She felt charmed that he was actually giving her a gift, and it was an Eggos waffle! She took it and continued smiling at him. "Thanks, Mike." He nodded as a reply. Both of them looked into each other's eyes, their hearts racing at the sight of each other. They both felt like...they both didn't know how to describe it, but...when they were together, it felt like they needed each other.

Without a single thought, Jane walked a little closer to Mike. He was stiff, not knowing what to do and his heart racing even faster-

All of a sudden, the door shot open, making the two separate from each other and look at who opened it. Their feelings for each other immediately disappeared. It was no other than a panicked Dustin. "Guys!" he shouted at them. "I-it's Lucas! I think he's in trouble!" Now they were both worried, exiting the bathroom with him and going to the walkie-talkie on the D&D table.

They all heard Lucas's voice, loud and indiscernible. Jane put the waffle in the pocket of her jacket and grabbed the device, holding it up to her ear and hoping to make some sense out of what he's shouting. It was with no luck. "What is he saying?" she asked her curly-haired friend, making him shrug.

"He's outta range, so I dunno," he replied.

She sighed and pressed the comm button, speaking, "Lucas, slow down. If you can hear us, please slow down. We don't know what you're saying." She let go of the button and tried to hear what he was saying.

---

Riding on his bike as fast as he could, Lucas shouted into his taped walkie-talkie, "Yes, I copy, Jane! Do you?! They know about Michael! Get outta there, they know about Mike! The bad men are coming, all of them! Get outta there, now!"

---

The three still had no luck at understanding his shouting. "Mad hen? What the hell does that mean?" Dustin asked, sounding a bit annoyed that he couldn't understand it. Both Jane and Mike shrugged.

*"The bad men are coming!"* they finally heard him shout. All of their eyes widened at that statement.

"B-bad men...?" the curly-haired girl stammered in shock. "The bad men...they know where Mike is!" She put the walkie-talkie down and gestured Mike to stay put. "Mike, stay here, okay?!" She then ran upstairs, Dustin following suit. Mike never looked so terrified in his life.

They found him...the bad men actually him...

...

The two friends ran upstairs and looked out of a window in Jane's bedroom. They saw the man in the parked van looking at them from afar. "Wh-what's that guy doing...?" Jane asked in a scared tone.

"You don't think...?" Dustin replied, the two looking at each other with terrified looks. Both came to the same conclusion:

That man was one of the bad men.

Jane instantly ran out of her bedroom and down the stairs at a fast speed. She saw both Becky and Carl in the living room, watching television. "Auntie!" the tomboy shouted to her aunt as she and her husband stood up. Both looked surprised that Jane had a horrified look on her face.

"Jane? What's the matter?" Becky asked in concern.

"D-did Mama tell you about any repairs she scheduled for this house?"

Both adults looked confused, shaking their heads. "No, darlin'. Why?"

...

From the window, Dustin saw the array of vans similar to the one across the street arrive. They saw both of the doctors looking at him. Terrified by their glares, he immediately shut the curtains and ran downstairs to get Jane.



...

"N-not at all before she left to go shopping?"

Becky and Carl shook their heads. "Didn't tell us anything, Jane," the man replied.

The girl let out a deep sigh, placing her hands on her temples. She then ran to the window and opened the curtains, seeing the array of vans park in front of the home. Her eyes widened and she muttered something under breath in distress.

Her aunt and uncle look through the window and looked shocked to see those vans too. "What in the hell...?" Becky inaudibly said.

"Jane!" shouted Dustin, who just entered into the kitchen. She, as well as her aunt and uncle, looked back at him. "We need to leave...NOW!"

She nodded. "R-right!" She then ran with him downstairs.

"W-wait, Jane! Where're you going?!" Becky asked her in a loud voice.

She stopped, turned to her, and replied, "I-if Mama asks or anybody else, I left this country!" She then ran with Dustin down into the basement.

Both her and Carl looked shocked that she even said that. "What?! Jane!"

"I think we need to get her," Carl suggested in worry. She nodded as they both began to run down into the basement as well.

...

The panicked children quickly got out of the basement and got their bikes. Jane and Dustin ran theirs up the hill of the home, Michael running in-between them. When they reached to level ground, they got on, Mike getting onto the second seat of Jane's. All of them looked at the people who exited the vans. Both the doctors stopped at a distance from them, looking at Michael, Dr. Wheeler smiling a

little. The boy looked very scared...he never wanted to see either of them again...

Dr. Brenner then looked at Jane. He wasn't that close to her, but the brown curly hair and facial structure...he smiled. It has been years, but he finally saw her again. "Jane," he called out to her, making all three of the kids look shocked that he even knew her name. "Long time, no see...my child."

Words cannot describe how appalled the tomboy was when he said that. That man, that one bad man...was her Papa?! N-no, he couldn't be!

The freckled boy was also very appalled at that. The doctor, that awful doctor with his dad, HE was Jane's dad?! He looked at the expression on her face, feeling absolutely terrible for her.

"Jane!" Becky shouted as she and Carl went on the level ground. "What the hell is going-" Suddenly, she noticed Dr. Brenner, both him and Dr. Wheeler looking at her. Martin did recognize her, she was Terry's sister. He didn't recognize Carl though.

Her eyes widened at the sight of him and all of these people and vans. Carl was shocked at the sight of the people and vans too. She couldn't believe it...he was back again...

"Go!" Dustin shouted to Jane, everyone else's attention towards him too. "Gogogogogogo!" Snapping out of her shock, the girl and her capped friend both began riding away to a shortcut as fast as they could. The doctors and the rest of the agents went back into their vans and started their engines, driving away from the home and chasing down the biking children.

Becky and Carl just witnessed all of this with completely dumbfounded looks, trying to process what just happened. "What was that all about?" Carl asked his wife. She shrugged, not saying a word. Seriously, what the hell happened? Why did Martin show up with all those people in those vans?! Why were they chasing the kids?! "Should we call the police?"

Those people actually look official enough, so she replied, "I think

they're the government."

He gave her a dumbfounded look. "Then what the hell did they want with our niece?"

She shrugged again, being absolutely appalled by what just happened. "I dunno, hun. I dunno..."

...

Dustin kept saying swears and "Oh my God"s in utter horror as he, Jane, and Mike were now riding on another road thanks to the shortcut they took to avoid the bad men. Lucas was talking into Dustin's headphones, making him reply, "Yes, Lucas! They're on us!" There was a pause as Jane and Mike looked back to make sure they didn't see the vans. "Cornwallis! ...Copy!" The curly-haired boy looked at the two and shouted, "Lucas wants us to meet him at Elm and Cherry!"

"Gotcha!" Jane replied as she and the boys took a shortcut to another road. She still couldn't get what Brenner said to her out of her head.

When they got onto that road, they saw the vans just entering it as well and catching up to them. "Oh my God!" Dustin exclaimed again. "Shit!"

"This way!" The kids then cut through a backyard. Two girls played patty-cake while the other played with Rubik's Cube. Jane shouted, "Outta the way!" The girls did get out of their way as they rode through some trees and finally stopped at Elm and Cherry, where Lucas was.

"L-Lucas..." Jane said to the black-haired boy, being out of breath.

"Where are they?!" he asked them both.

"I-I dunno," Dustin answered.

"Maybe we...lost them-" Jane answered when suddenly, they all heard tires screeching. They turned back to see the vans catching up to them still. All of them were in a panic. "Oh no! Go, go, go!" The kids began biking fast once again. These bad men could never catch a

break until they catch them!

Dustin now screamed swears as the girl shouted continuously, "Faster!" They all tried to bike as fast as they could. Mike looked back at the vans in horror, seeing his dad and Jane's dad looking straight at them. He could feel his skin crawling at them just glaring at him and the rest of the kids like that.

He turned back just when another van appeared and was heading right towards them. All of them became petrified, wondering what to do. The curly-haired boy screamed the top of his lungs as the curly-haired girl shouted constantly, "Nonononono..." The freckled boy instantly thought of something.

He tilted his head down and looked at the van, straining himself. When it was close enough, it suddenly went up and over the biking children. All of the kids looked up in utter awe, Michael looking surprised that he managed to do that. It then landed upside down, blocking the way of the other vans. Still in awe, the kids looked at each other, Michael's nose bleeding from the strain. He looked back to make sure the vans stopped. They were, making him smirk and murmur, "Mouth-breathers." The kids began to bike away from the suburbs.

The doctors got out of their van and looked at the children riding their bikes away from them. Both of them looked quite angered by this circumstance. "Well, I'll be damned," Dr. Wheeler said to his comrade. "Terry escapes, then we come to her home and get caught by, I guess, her relatives, then we see your biological daughter biking my son away with some other kids." He then turned to him. "No offense, Martin, but you're stirring up more trouble than the both of us ever needed."

He had to agree with him there. Never had he made so many mistakes in only just a few days. However... "I won't deny my mistakes, but like I said before, this kind of work is never easy," he replied to him in a serious voice. "We just need to work harder, more harder now."

---

After a dozen minutes, the kids finally made to the junkyard to hide

out. All of them got off of their bikes, sitting down with their backs against a broken-down bus there to catch their breaths. "H-holy shit..." Dustin said in a breathy voice. "D-did you guys see...what he did back there?"

Jane answered also in a breathy voice, "Yeah...we all saw it..."

"He flipped a freaking VAN...with his MIND!" Mike smiled a little, feeling a bit humbled that Dustin liked that. "That was-"

"Awesome," Lucas finished for him, the freckled boy now looking at him. He looked back at him too with an apologetic face. "Listen, man...about what I said about you being a traitor and stuff and...me fighting you...I'm so sorry." Mike's eyebrows raised, surprised that he was apologizing to him. He then stood up and crouched in front of him. "Everything I said there, I was wrong. And it was more wrong for me to fight you like that. At that moment, I just..." He sighed. "I was just looking for Jane. She's my friend, you know that, right?" He nodded. "I was angry and stupid and it was uncalled for, so..." He placed a hand on his shoulder. "I'm sorry, man."

Mike had to take a few seconds to process his apology. He was glad he wasn't mad at him this time, even if he accidentally almost killed him. He was just glad. Looking at him in the eyes, he replied, "Friends...don't lie...I'm sorry too." Lucas nodded at him, smiling and accepting his apology.

Jane decided to apologize to him as well, standing up and saying, "Me too, Lucas. I'm sorry for shoving you like that." He stood up and turned to her. The girl extended her hand out for him to shake. He looked at it for a few seconds. The tomboy looked pretty sincere and besides, Jane was a good friend to him over the years.

He approached her and replied, "I'm sorry for my comment about you looking like a boy." They then shook hands, finally reaffirming their friendship.

---

Hopper, Joyce, and Terry finally arrived at the police station, parking their cars and going inside. When they went through the entrance, they saw Jonathan and Kali sitting together. Both mothers looked

shocked as they quickly approached them.

"Hey, Jonathan, wh-what happened?" Joyce asked her son. "Why are you in handcuffs?"

"What's going on?" Terry asked her adoptive daughter. She sighed and didn't answer.

"Ladies," Officer Callahan said as he stood up from his chair and walked to them.

"Why is he in handcuffs?" the frantic mother asked him.

"He assaulted me, that's why."

"I-it wasn't on purpose," Jonathan replied in defense.

"Doesn't matter-"

"Take them off," Joyce coldly demanded the officer. "Take them off!"

"I believe I can't do that, m'am-"

"Can you please take them off?" Terry asked.

"Miss-"

"You heard the women, now take them off," Hopper chimed in.

Officer Powell sighed. "Chief, I know everybody's getting real emotional here, but there's something you need to see," he stated to him as he and Callahan gestured him to come with them to their police car. He sighed and decided to follow them.

The mothers turned to their teenagers, the brown-haired woman asking, "What happened, you two?"

"M-Mom, it's just..." the auburn-haired guy began to answer before trailing off, wondering if he should tell her or not. Kali decided not to say anything either.

"Kali?" Terry asked her daughter. "What happened?" The girl shook her head, worrying her even more. The teenage girl kept wondering

whether or not to tell them like her friend was.

"Come on, you guys-" Joyce said before the opening of the door cut her off. The mothers looked at Hopper carrying a box and setting it on the table in their front view. Both looked shocked when they saw the hunting supplies in there. While Joyce was utterly puzzled, Terry got the idea why they had these in the first place. "Wh-what is this?"

"Ask your son, we found it in his car," Hopper responded.

Surprised and mad that he did that, Jonathan asked coldly, "Why are you looking through my car?"

The police chief leaned forward to him on the table. "Is that the question you should be asking me right now?" He paused, taking in the teenage guy's cold stare. "I'll see you in my office."

"You won't believe me."

The man scoffed at them. "Then why don't you give me a try?"

"Hopper," the dirty-blond-haired woman said to the man.

"Not now, Terry."

"I need to tell you something." She then dragged him away from the rest of the people and began whispering in his ear. Everyone else looked at them. While the officers and Joyce looked confused, Kali and Jonathan figured out what Terry might be whispering to him. After all, they did tell her about what they were going to do today.

Hopper looked back at the teens, surprised at what he was told about why they had those supplies. He wondered what the hell he should do with them...

---

Becky was in the bathroom upstairs, washing her hands and still processing what had just happened earlier. She really, really wanted to know what the hell was going on. God, she hoped her niece and her friends were alright...well, there was one other boy she noticed. It wasn't Lucas, but another boy with a shaved head. Who the hell was that?

As she turned off the sink, she exited the bathroom and went downstairs. She looked around, seeing that the thing was a mess. She sighed before noticing the little fort. She approached it and took a good look at it. It was set up like a little bed of some sort...probably for the new friend? She noticed something down on the pillow, so she grabbed it and looked at it. It was a clump of black hair. Who the hell did this belong to...?

The doorbell suddenly rang, catching her attention. She heard Carl yell, "I'll get it, honey!" Even though he was, she was still curious about who was at the door, so she let go of the clump and walked back upstairs.

...

The man rose from the couch and approached the door. As he opened it, he saw the agents and vans, as well as the two doctors, in his sight. His eyes widened. The blonde-haired woman asked, "Carl Mueller?"

He slowly nodded. "Yes..." The woman held a badge up that confirmed her to be of the government, making him think that his wife wasn't kidding.

Becky now appeared next to him, the blonde-haired woman's attention now towards her. "Rebecca Mueller?" she asked her. She nodded as a response.

"You're right, they're government." Now the woman was completely worried, that feeling skyrocketing when she saw Dr. Brenner again. Dear God, what was going on?

...

As the agents thoroughly searched the home, Becky and Carl observed in much worry. However, the woman couldn't keep her eyes off of Brenner, since it was years since she's last seen him. "Becky?" Carl asked.

"That man over there..." she said as she pointed at him talking to Dr. Wheeler, her husband looking at him. "That's Terry's ex."



He looked shocked. "Him? Are you sure?"

She nodded. "Yes. His hair's grayer, but his face remains the same." She knew he was part of the government, but him being here? Something had to be going down and she wanted to know what.

...

Dr. Wheeler, after talking to Brenner about the situation and how to deal with it, went downstairs to look for evidence that M11, his son, was there. He looked at a laundry basket and saw an over-sized yellow shirt with a burger logo on it. It read, "Benny's Diner". He sighed. This was clear evidence that Michael was there.

...

"S-so, lemme get this straight," Becky said, sitting at the dinner table with her husband and the blonde agent. "My sister and her daughter were hiding this boy?" She pointed at a mug shot of Michael on a folder. That was who she saw riding with Jane earlier...that boy.

"What's going on with his hair?" Carl asked.

Not answering the question, the woman said to them, "We just need to know if you've seen him in the past week." Both of them shook their heads, but then remembered something.

"We didn't SEE him, but..." Carl paused. "A few days ago, before Becky and I left for lunch, he heard an intruder here." The woman nodded.

"Yeah, we thought it might be Jane's friend, Will Byers, but it was probably not, due to the news and everythin'."

"Did you get a good look at this intruder?" the woman asked.

Both shook their heads again. "We thought they might've hid, but my husband tripped and bit his tongue, so I had to go put some ice on it." The woman nodded again. "After that, we continued looking for them, and nothin'. We assumed they might've escaped."

The man sighed. "I don't know how I tripped. I was standing still, I

wasn't going to move at all."

The woman nodded once again. "It could be him. Have you seen him since then?"

Again, the married couple shook their heads. "No," they both answered.

"If my niece had another boy stayin' over, she'd tell me," Becky responded before sighing. "What has the boy done?"

The female agent shook her head. "I can't answer that, m'am."

She looked annoyed. "Is he Russian or somethin'?"

"I can't say. It's classified information."

Now she looked angry. "I need to know! My sister and my niece are in danger!"

Carl tried to hold her down and whisper, "Honey, calm down."

"I would listen to your husband, Rebecca," the woman added.

At that moment, she didn't care, standing up and yelling, "Ya come 'ere, ya chase my niece and her friend down, then ya come here and tell us that my niece and my sister are in danger, but ya can't tell me why?! You expect me to remain calm doing that shit?!"

The female agent looked defeated and looked at the two doctors for help. They nodded at her, the woman standing up and walking away. Dr. Brenner was the one to sit down first, looking at Becky first and saying, "I know how hard this is for you, Rebecca."

She looked at him coldly. She could just feel his fakeness bouncing off of her. However, since he was government, she had to be polite. She sat back down and crossed her arms. "Martin, been a long time."

He nodded at her, chuckling a little. "Yes, it has been." Dr. Wheeler then sat down next to him, nodding at her.

"Mrs. Mueller," he greeted her before greeting Carl. "Mr. Mueller." She

didn't greet back because he didn't look trustworthy enough. "We can't disclose any information for safety purposes, but I can tell you this: Your niece, Jane Ives, is in real danger." Carl looked worried while Becky looked very upset. Her husband held her hand to comfort her.

"A-and Terry?" she asked them.

"She's in danger as well." Now she looked at him. "We want to help them. We really do. Terry and I may have separated ways, but that does not mean I do not care for her well-being. And since Jane is my daughter, I care about her well-being too." The short-haired woman sniffed a little, about to cry. She didn't feel like what he was saying was faked, it sounded...sincere...no, that was just her sadness talking, right?

"We'll give you our word," Ted added, Martin nodding. "But first, we need to know that you both can trust us. Will you two trust us?"

"Will you trust me, Rebecca?" Martin asked of the dirty-blond-haired female. "I know you probably don't think of me well because of the divorce, but I truly want to know. I promise you, I will bring back Terry and Jane alive and well. Will you trust me and my good friend?"

Carl looked at his wife, who sighed heavy and tried holding back tears. She didn't want to lose them. Visiting them and then losing them? She never wanted that. She and Terry already lost their parents. If she lost her and her cute little niece...

She looked at the two doctors and nodded. "Yes," she answered, her voice almost a croak. Patting his wife's shoulder, Carl looked at them and nodded as well, making them both smile.

"Good..." Dr. Brenner murmured under his breath.

"Now, we need your answer for this question," Dr. Wheeler stated. "Where do you think your sister and niece might be?"

---

**Done! What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes?**

Uh oh...looks like Jane finally knows who her father is...I always wanted to write in that Jane actually sees Brenner for the first time in forever, so here it is!

I hated writing the scene where Becky and Carl talk with Brenner and Ted because...well, we all know that they're lying through the teeth in the most convincing way possible...

Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter!

## 20. Lando Calrissian

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Lucas created a line in the dirt with a stick. He had other sticks arranged to be the lab's fence. He and the rest of the kids gathered around it. "So this is Randolph Road," he stated before placing his stick at the top of another stick. "The fence starts here, then goes all the way around." He then moved his stick like a circle and placed an empty soda can at the middle. "Then right here is the lab." He looked at the rest of his friends. "The gate is in there somewhere, it's gotta be."

"Who owns Hawkins Lab?" asked Dustin.

"The sign said 'Department of Energy'."

"What does that mean?"

"Maybe the government? The military?" Jane questioned.

"You sure?"

She shrugged. "Just trust me, Dustin."

"She's right," Lucas said. "I saw soldiers out in the open there."

The curly-haired boy looked confused. "They make light bulbs or something?"

The tomboy shook her head. "No, I think they make weapons to fight the commies and stuff." Suddenly, all of them looked shocked in realization.

"Weapons..." They then looked at Mike, who looked nervously at them. "Oh God, this isn't good."

"The place is built like a fortress," the African-American boy added, him and his friends not noticing a helicopter noise except for Mike, who looked back.

"Then what do we do?"

"We can't go back home, that's for sure," Jane stated. "We're fugitives now."

When everything fell silent, Mike stood up and pointed at something in the sky. Everyone else stood up and saw what he was pointing at. It was a helicopter, coming right towards them. Instantly, all of them were in a panic.

...

After messing up the sticks and can and stuffing their bikes under the bus, they all went inside the bus and closed the door. "Get down!" Jane shouted as they all got down, out of sight from most of the windows. They tried to stay silent as the helicopter noise became louder. All of them were feeling terrified, hoping that it wouldn't see them. When the noise receded, all of them became relieved, Dustin saying, "Mental." Indeed, this was all pretty "mental" to all of them, even Mike, even though he didn't know what it meant.

---

In Hopper's office, the police chief looked at a photo Jonathan, who was finally uncuffed, gave to him as well as the mothers. The two teenagers were sitting on chairs, watching them look at it. Terry pointed at the creature in the photo. "Looked exactly like that when I was looking for Will," she said to them, Kali nodding in affirmation. Joyce looked absolutely terrified at the thought that her son was in the same place as that...thing while Hopper just sighed and looked at the teens.

"And you two say that blood draws this thing?" he asked them.

"It's just a theory," Jonathan answered.

"But it's possible," Kali added. "I know it."

The adults nodded as Joyce gestured her oldest son to come with her. Sighing, he stood up and followed her out the door. That left the Indian girl looking at her adoptive mother. The woman sighed and walked to her, sitting next to her. She wanted to tell her something

just so it was out of her chest.

"Kali." The teen looked like she was paying full attention to her. "I just wanted to say that I'm sorry."

She looked puzzled. "Sorry for what?"

"For not finding Barbara down there."

The teen girl sighed and gave her mother a reassuring smile. "It's alright, Mum." She looked at her in a bit of surprise. "At least two of the people I love aren't trapped there. It'd destroy me, you know?" Her smile disappeared, her mouth drawing into a thin line and looking somber. She sighed and continued, "I don't know how I would feel if you were trapped there too..." She sniffed, making her adoptive mother feel terrible for her and hug her.

"Oh, sweetie..." she whispered to her. She honestly did feel a little better that her oldest daughter forgave her. Now, there was Joyce...

Suddenly, they both heard yelling not too far from them. It wasn't from Joyce or Jonathan. Hopper sighed and exited the room, saying to the mothers and their teens, "Stay here, you four."

He then arrived at the scene where a woman and her son, who was actually Troy (now wearing an arm cast for his broken arm), and asked, "What the hell is going on here, you two?" He looked at Callahan and Powell for an answer.

Troy's mother turned to him and answered, "Your officers are humiliating my son!"

Callahan, being defensive, said, "No, no, no, untrue."

She turned to him and scoffed. "TRUE!"

Powell sighed and told the chief, "There was some fight and-"

"A psychotic child broke his arm!"

The officer with the glasses sighed and clarified, "Some boy with a buzz-cut, I dunno." Hopper's eyes widened from that statement.

The woman looked at him, offended. "There it is! That tone!"

Callahan scoffed. "I'm just stating a fact, Chief!"

Needing answers, the man looked at Troy and asked, "A boy with a buzz-cut, you said?"

He nodded. "Y-yeah and he was dressed like a nerd without the glasses...a-and his nose was bleeding. He looked like a freak!" He paused, gulping and looking down in a bit of embarrassment. "And...he can..."

"He can do what?"

The boy looked at his mother for encouragement. She nodded and said, "Tell the man about it, Troy.

He looked back at him. "He can do things like..." He paused. "Making you fly..." His eyes widened more. That had to be Michael. The bully muttered under his breath, "And pissing yourself."

Powell held back a chuckle and said, "What?"

Hopper took a deep breath and asked, "Was he alone?"

He shook his head. "He always hangs out with that tranny and her gang of losers." He looked puzzled at what he just said.

"A trans person and her gang of losers?"

Troy sighed. "I-I mean, Jane's not really trans, but she looks like one. That's why I call her a tranny." Now it hit him. Terry's daughter was with Michael...

Well, shit. How would Terry react to this?

...

"You have to be kidding me," a completely shocked Terry said to Hopper, who just broke the news to her as she, Kali, and the Byers were leaving the police station. "My youngest daughter, with Michael?!"



"The description fits," he replied to her.

"B-but...I didn't see him at home at all-"

"D'ya think that's because your daughter's pretty good at hiding him?" She didn't reply to that, thinking about that. There were numerous occasions where Jane would hide some Eggos, or candy, or R-rated movies from her. However, she always caught her in those times. Now...now was probably different...after all, Jane was acting a bit off lately...now it made sense to her.

But then...if he was out and Jane got him...

She gasped and turned to Kali. "Sweetie, we can't go back home. We're going to Joyce's."

The black-haired girl looked shocked while the Byers looked surprised. "What?! Why, Mum?!"

She shook her head. "It's dangerous there now."

"Why is it-"

"I'll tell you when we get there, okay?" Kali sighed, now getting worried.

"B-but what about Aunt Becky and Uncle Carl?!"

Terry let out a worried sigh. "I so hope they aren't there..." They would be safe even if Martin and Ted were there, but for her...

Hopper gestured everyone together and they did. He then asked in a whisper, "Now, we need to find these kids before the lab people do. Do any of you have any idea where they might have gone?" All of them shook their heads, Hopper looking at Kali. "Maybe you know where Jane is?"

She shook her head. "No," she answered, whispering. "I don't know, we don't talk to each other that much."

"Maybe there's some place I don't know that Jane might go to?" Terry asked her.

She shook her head again. "No, I don't know, Mum."

"I might," Jonathan said, getting everyone's attention. "I may not know where she is, but I might know how to find her." All of them looked at him curiously, wondering what the hell he was talking about.

A distant figure in a disguised van saw them from afar, staring at Terry in particular...he had a walkie-talkie to his mouth and said through it, "I see Teresa with a couple of teenagers, a woman, and the police chief. What should I do?" He listened to the answer, then looked shocked, saying, "Wait, what? Why?" After hearing a long answer, he nodded. "Understood, sir."

---

Terry's car and Hopper's car arrived at the Byers home, parking their cars and getting out of them. They went inside, Kali looking around in a bit of awe since there were many Christmas lights. They arrived to Will's room, the teen guy looking through his drawers for something while Joyce looked everywhere else. "Will has this walkie-talkie to talk to his friends with," Jonathan stated. "Best-case scenario, they have their walkie-talkies with them."

"Found it!" Joyce said as she got out the walkie-talkie from under the bed, now they were in business.

---

Still in the bus, kids sat there. The helicopter still wasn't going away, so they had to stay in there or else, there will be trouble. Suddenly, Jane's walkie-talkie stirred up from her backpack and Kali's voice asked through it, "*Jane?*" All of them looked shocked, especially the girl in question. "*Jane, are you there?*" Slowly, she crept to the backpack and got out the device. She held it up close to her ear, her friends huddling with her as Kali continued, "*Jane, answer me. Are you there?*"

"Is that your sister?" Lucas asked the tomboy. Honestly, she was baffled to even hear her voice through this thing. Why...?

---

"Jane, this is an emergency," the Indian girl continued, the rest of the

group with her. "Do you copy?" She paused, hoping for an answer and not getting one. She sighed and asked, "Jane, do you copy?"

---

"This is...weird..." Dustin commented, being just as confused as everybody else. Jane was thinking of why Kali might be talking to her through this...and it wasn't a pleasant thought.

"Just answer your sister," Lucas suggested.

The curly-haired girl shook her head. "No," she replied.

He looked more puzzled. "What? Why no? She said it was an emergency-"

"Maybe it's a trick. Maybe the bad people got her and are forcing her to say this." He remained silent like everyone else, thinking that it could be a possibility. And if it was her father that was holding her hostage...

Oh God, why would he do that to his own adopted daughter? What if he did the same with her mom when she gets back? Her aunt? Her uncle?

Why was he one of the bad people in the first place?!

"Just like Lando Calrissian..." Dustin muttered before nodding. "Yeah, don't answer it." The kids then sat in silence.

*"Come on, Jane! We need to know you are there!"*

---

Sighing, Terry gestured her to give her the walkie-talkie, in which she did. She pressed the button and spoke into it, "Jane, it's your mama. Are you there?"

---

Jane gasped at hearing her mother's voice. She really wanted to answer, but she knew she couldn't. She looked at the boys, all of them shaking their heads.

---

Terry sighed and tried again. "Listen, Jane. I'm with your sister, the police chief, and the Byers. Nobody else. We know that you got Michael."

---

The kids' eyes widened, the three looking at the telekinetic boy in question. He looked both baffled and shocked, not knowing how her MOTHER now knows about him. *"He may be called Michael Eleven or M11. Now, will you answer?"* Terry asked through the walkie-talkie.

The kids looked back at it, Jane muttering, "How does she know about...?" None of them knew...

---

"Here, you heard your sister, now hear everybody else."

She brought the walkie-talkie to the Byers, first Joyce saying, "I-I'm here."

Jonathan followed up with saying, "Me too."

She then brought it to Hopper, in which he said, "It's the chief, kids-"

---

*"We can protect you and help you, but you need to tell us where you are, okay?"* they heard him ask.

---

She brought the walkie-talkie back to herself and continued, "There's the confirmation. It's just us, sweetheart. The chief is right, we can protect you and we can help you. Just answer, okay? Do you copy?" She unpressed the button and put it to her ear, hoping to hear an answer from them.

---

All of them looked at each other, completely baffled at the fact that...well, they weren't the only ones that knew about Mike's existence. "What should we do?" Jane asked them. They all shrugged, completely void of ideas. She sighed and thought, should she answer or not...? Her mother did confirm it...

---

"Come on, say something," Terry muttered to herself with hope. "Say something..."

The police chief sighed and looked at Jonathan. "Ya got any other ideas?" He shook his head. All of them looked extremely worried. Now wha-

Suddenly, Jane's voice stirred through the walkie-talkie and said, *"I copy, Mama."* The dirty-blond-haired woman's face lit up in relief, everyone else looking surprised that she answered. *"I-it's Jane...your daughter..."* Terry could never felt so relieved in her life...just hearing her voice...

---

"I'm here," she continued, the boys looking at her, hoping she made the right decision. "I-I'm with the boys and...Mike. We're here."

---

Back at the theater, a bloody-faced Steve Harrington looked at the guy wiping the graffiti from the sign. He let out a sigh. He just got out of an argument with Tommy and Carol about Jonathan and Kali. They were making fun of him for being an idiot and even made fun of Kali and the fact that she had an accent, pretending to yell at him like she did before. He never realized what a bunch of assholes they were.

Hell, he never realized how much of an asshole he was until today, considering what he did earlier.

He wanted to change, become a better guy...and a better boyfriend.

God, Kali must be so pissed at him right now. He hoped he can make up for it, and that was why he decided to ask if he would cleaning that graffiti off of the sign. "Ya need a hand?" he asked the man. Today and for the rest of his days, he will change. Not just for her, but for himself.

---

Becky and Carl worriedly looked out of the window as the doctors and the rest of the agents began to leave. The woman just deeply sighed. "They expect us to sit here like a buncha ducks ready to get

shot," she said bitterly. "We should be lookin' for 'em too."

"Honey, it's alright," Carl replied, gently holding her shoulders. "They're part of the government, so they're on our side." God, she hoped they were, especially Martin...

Even though she told him that she trusts him, she still didn't like the aura he gave off. Same goes for that other guy, his "good friend", he called him. Still, she just hoped that she would find Terry and Jane...

Suddenly, she realized something, turning to Carl. "Kali. Wh-what d'ya think's gonna happen to her?"

The man shrugged. "I just hope she gets back here fine." She nodded as she saw every one of them leave. She let out another deep sigh. "Everything will be alright, Rebecca."

Swear to Christ, she hoped it would.

---

Dustin paced around on the bus and was breathing heavily while the rest of the kids just sat around, waiting for the adults to pick them up. Annoyed by Dustin's actions, Jane asked, "Can you please stop that?"

He did stop pacing, but he kept breathing heavily. "It's been way too long, guys," he said to all of them in worry. "Maybe this IS a trap and the bad men are coming to get us right now!"

Lucas shook his head. "It's not a trap," he replied to him. "We heard no one else through that walkie-talkie. Why would they set us up?"

He pointed at him with a serious face. "Lando Calrissian."

He rolled his eyes at him. "Will you shut up about Lando?!"

"I just don't feel good about this-"

"When the hell have you felt good about anything?!"

"Guys, shut up!" Jane yelled in an annoyed tone, the two boys looking at her. She sighed and laid on her back. She was still trying to process

the fact that her mother and her older sister knew about Mike AND that her father was one of the bad men. She almost didn't want to believe all of that...but it was happening. It was happening right now. God...

"You alright, Jane?" Lucas asked cautiously.

Before she could answer, Dustin replied, "Of course she's not. She's seen her dad today."

The African-American boy looked puzzled as hell. "Wait, what? How?!"

"He's one of the bad men."

Now he was completely baffled. "How the hell would you know if he's her dad?"

"He called me by my name and..." Jane answered, making him look at her. "He said I was his child..." She put her hands on her temples, feeling stressed and anxious about that fact. All of the boys looked at her, feeling absolutely terrible for her, especially Mike.

"Just like Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader," the curly-haired boy stated. "God, this is all like Star Wars..." She nodded. This was like Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader and Star Wars...god...

All of them heard vehicles approaching. Mike and Jane let go of each other's hands as they all went to the windshield to see who was coming. They saw two black cars stopping...seeing men in suits. That wasn't a good sign for them. "Shit!" Dustin muttered.

"Go, go, go!" Jane whispered as they quickly got out of the sight of the windshield and hid themselves behind seats.

"Lando..."

"You think they saw us...?" Lucas asked.

"Guys, be quiet," Jane told the two of them. All of their hearts were racing in fear now. They all really, really, REALLY hope they weren't caught.

A couple moments went by and there was nothing so far. All of the kids were breathing heavily. But then, they heard the door open. They were all frozen stiff, not moving a muscle. Suddenly, they heard the man getting punched at the face and knocked out. They then heard the other guys getting beat up and knocked out too. They were all pretty surprised. Who did that?

It was Hopper, who appeared in the bus. They all stood up and looked at him in relief. "Alright, come on," he said to them. They didn't move, making him raise his voice. "Come...on!" They all nodded as they got their stuff and got out of the bus with him.

---

It was nighttime as the rest of the group waited for Hopper to come back for the kids. It has been a long time, making them worry about him and the kids' safety, especially Terry.

They all then saw the headlights of the car arriving, making them all stand up and go outside. The car stopped and the kids exited out of it. Filled with joy that Jane was back, both Terry and Kali called out, "Jane!" They then ran to her and hugged her. She never felt so embarrassed in her life, especially since Kali, who she doesn't talk to often, was hugging her too.

After releasing the hug, Kali said, "We were so worried about you."

"We're glad you're alright, sweetie," Terry added.

"Uh...yeah...me too..." Jane awkwardly responded.

The dirty-blonde-haired woman then saw Michael, right before her eyes. She looked shocked, seeing him all grown-up now. She slowly walked to him and bent down to his height. He looked at her as if she was acting weird. "Michael," she said to him as she placed her hands on his shoulders. "Do you remember me?" His eyes widened while Jane looked utterly confused. She...she knew Mike before?

Now he remembered...the memory was a bit vague, but...

---

*He was very young, seeing her observe him doing...something with his*



*mind. She smiled at him and carried him up.*

*"Oh, you are such a cute little boy~, " she cooed to him happily. "You and my daughter Jane should play together sometime..."*

---

He gasped. Jane's mother...Jane's mother was the only adult back in that place that was nice to him...then she disappeared and he never knew why. Now that she was right in front of him...

He nodded and gave her a hug, startling her. She then smiled and hugged him back. Jane was awfully baffled.

What the hell was going on today?!

---

Lucas and Dustin were showing the rest of the adults and the teens the acrobat and the flea example. Jane was still trying to process everything...

So, her father, her actual father, was one of the bad men and then her mother, she knew about Mike and he knew about her...

She wanted answers for all of this...she really did.

"...that the only way to get there is through a rip in time and space," Lucas said.

"A gate," Dustin added.

"Which is in Hawkins Lab."

"We tracked that with our compasses." Everyone but the kids looked puzzled, so the curly-haired boy elaborated, "The gate has a strong electromagnetic field that can change the direction of a compass needle."

"Does this gate happen to be underground?" Hopper asked them.

"Yes," both Terry and Mike answered, the two looking at each other with surprised faces.

The woman decided to ask him, "It was near a big water tank, right?" He nodded, making her sigh. "I've been through there, what you kids call the 'Upside Down'." Jane looked absolutely shocked at her mother. "I was trying to find Will and Barbara, but I had no luck. All I heard were footsteps. Could be either of them. I escaped since Kali was in danger." Now that was something else Jane needed to process as well...her mother was in the Upside Down...as well as her adoptive sister?!

Terry sighed once more and shook her head. "I can't go back there. They see me, they'll shoot me on sight, I know it." The kids' eyes widened as well as Kali's.

"Sh-shoot you on sight...?" Jane asked, her voice in fear. "Wh-wh-why, Mama?"

She sighed once again and rubbed her face. "Long story, I'll tell you later." She couldn't believe this. Now her youngest daughter had to learn about her work in the labs. Meanwhile, the tomboy just looked so appalled by all of this news coming at her, all at once...

"Y-you can channel Will, right?" Joyce asked Mike, the boy nodding as an answer. "C-can you find him?" He nodded again.

"And my friend, Barbara," Kali said, the boy now looking at her. "Can you find her too?"

He nodded once again. "Yes."

...

Mike was sitting at the dinner table, having a walkie-talkie and picture of Barbara near him. The device let out static. He took a deep breath. Everyone one else was around him, hoping they can hear something from either or maybe both of the missing people. The static increased and the lights began flickering. Suddenly, they went back to normal and the static became faint, Mike opening his eyes. He looked sad at everyone, worrying them instantly. "I'm sorry..."

"Wh-what are you sorry for, Mike?" a frantic Joyce asked.

He shook his head. "I can't find them." Now everyone felt distressed,

making him for more terrible for being unable to find them.

...

He was in the bathroom, turning on the sink. He saw his reflection on the mirror, seeing the tears running down his face. He cupped a handful of water and splashed it on his face to get them away. He never felt so ashamed of himself in his life. All of those people were counting on him and he failed them...why?

Upset, he slammed his fist down on the sink and looked down at the water. He had to think of some other way to channel them. Radio static was not going to do him any good. He continued looking at the water...suddenly being hit by a bit of deja-vu. Water...

Water...

He then looked back at the bathtub, finally thinking of an idea, the way to have him channel Will and Barbara...

...

"Whenever he uses his powers, he gets tired," Jane informed everyone in the dining room.

"Yeah, the more of his power he uses, the more tired he gets," Dustin added.

"He flipped a van earlier," Lucas also added.

"And it was awesome."

The girl sighed. "Still, he's drained like a battery."

Terry nodded. "That's true," she stated. "The use of his powers consumes the energy in his brain and even his body."

"S-so, is there any way we make him feel better?" Joyce asked.

Jane shook her head. "We just wait and try again."

"How long?" asked Kali.

She shrugged. "I dunno." Everyone sighed at once. Now what can they do...?

Mike approached them and said, "The bath." Everyone looked at him as he looked at all of them. "I can find them...in the bath." The adults had an idea spark into their heads, knowing what he was talking about. The others, they had no idea what he was talking about. The bath?

...

After Dustin called Mr. Clarke about what was needed in a sensory deprivation tank, he hung up and looked at Joyce, asking, "Do you still have that kiddie pool we bobbed apples in before?"

She nodded and looked at her oldest son. "I-I think so," she said.

Jonathan nodded. "Yeah."

Dustin nodded back. "Okay. And we need A LOT of salt, like, A LOT."

"How much is 'A LOT'?" Hopper asked him.

He looked at the notes he took and answered, "1500."

Kali scoffed in disbelief. "Seriously? How are we going to get that much salt?" The chief began thinking of a certain place...

---

**Stopping here. What do you guys think? Any mistakes or typos?**

**Poor Jane...needs to process everything that was going on around her...**

**I always had in mind that Terry, when she was working for the labs, was the only decent person to Mike there, so of course, I wrote it in here. How did I do with that?**

**Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you guys in the next chapter! Happy New Year!**

## 21. Ready

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

**\*Also, Happy 2018!\***

**\*Also also, how do you guys like the new cover? I just recently discovered a Stranger Things text generator and used it to make a better cover. Sorry if it looks weird. The generator couldn't take M11 on its own, so I had to put 'M' on the top and '11' on the bottom.\***

---

As all of the cars drove to Hawkins Middle, Terry decided to tell her daughters all that she could about her former work at Hawkins Lab and Jane about what she and Hopper were doing in the Lab two days ago. Both looked absolutely shocked that they weren't told about this before, especially Jane. "That's why we're not going back home until all of this is resolved," the woman finished.

"B-but what about-" Jane was asking before her mother cut her off.

"Your aunt and uncle will be fine. They won't do anything to harm them." Both girls still looked worried.

"I kinda knew you worked with our dad, but still..." Kali stated, sighing.

"He's a dangerous man, working with another dangerous man. I will keep you both away from him the best that I can."

"But I saw him today..." Jane muttered, both Terry and Kali looking shocked.

"What?!" Terry exclaimed. "Wh-when today?!"

The tomboy sighed. "Earlier this afternoon, when Dustin and Mike and I were going to bike away, we saw him and the other guy look at us. He called me by my name and called me his child...just..." She put her hands on her temples again, shaking her head. "I'm still trying to process that I saw my papa today and that...he's a bad man..."

The dirty-blonde-haired woman felt her chest getting heavy. Her daughter, her biological daughter, saw him today...

Feeling bad, Kali patted her little sister's shoulder and said, "Hey, Mum told us that she'll keep us away from him. I'm glad you're alright. I'm glad they haven't caught you." The girl wished she felt better from hearing that.

"So am I," the woman added. "I'm so sorry, sweetheart. I never wanted you to see him." She couldn't even imagine what would have happened to her if Brenner ever got his hands on her again. She didn't want to. "Just please know that I will never let you go into his hands. You too, Kali. I don't want to lose you girls. You both are the reason why I am such a happy person, your loving and protective mother." They both nodded, smiling at her a little. They know their mother, loving and protecting her little girls until the very end.

Jane decided to say something else to her. "Also...about Mike..."

Terry knew where she was getting at, so she replied, "I was one of his observers, seeing how he can use his powers and how powerful it can be at his young age. I was probably the only person that was decent to him in that entire place." She smiled, thinking of Mike as a two-year-old compared to how he was now. "I can't believe it's been years. He's grown up."

The curly-haired girl still couldn't believe that her mother and Mike knew each other. But they were both happy when they saw each other, so she guessed it was fine. After all, she did say that she was the only person there that treated him decently.

...

All the cars arrived at the middle school to get the supplies they needed. Jonathan and Hopper were getting the deicing salt, Dustin and Lucas are setting up the kiddie pool in the gymnasium, Jane and Kali were getting the hoses, and Terry and Joyce were going to get something to darken Mike's sight with Mike himself.

When the teenager and the girl approached the supplies closet, Kali tried to open it. However, it was locked. She groaned and tried

finding another way to bust it open. Jane tried break it open with her shoulder, but she ended up hurting it instead. She flinched and muttered something under her breath.

Kali got a rock and warned Jane, "Stand back." The girl did so as she saw her older sister break the lock open with the rock. Jane was absolutely surprised she could actually do that. She knew she was a little tough-skinned, but still...

"Come on," she said to her. She nodded as they both went inside and got some hoses.

...

Kali was pushing a one-wheeled cart of hoses while Jane carried one roll of a hose. Out of nowhere, Kali asked, "What did he even eat?"

The curly-haired girl gave her a puzzled look. "Who?"

"Mike."

"Oh, he ate candy, leftovers, Eggos..."

She chuckled. "Eggos? Your favorite breakfast?" Jane only grinned, then Kali sighed. "I knew you were acting a bit weird lately, but I thought it was because of Will."

Her grin disappeared. "And I thought the same about you because of Steve." The Indian girl then stopped pushing, making her little adoptive sister look at her.

"You know what? From now on, no more secrets. We tell each other everything, alright?" She then smiled at her. "We're sisters. Maybe not blood-related sisters, but still sisters."

Jane nodded, kind of liking the idea of talking to Kali more, since she was actually becoming a bit tolerable now. "Okay..." She then asked, "Do you like Jonathan?"

Kali laughed a little and shook her head. "No way. I'm not interested, he's not interested. We're never going to be a thing." The girl nodded as the black-haired girl smirked and asked, "Do you like Mike?"

The girl tensed up from the comment, instantly sputtering, "Wh-what?! No, no way! Not happening!" She then quickened her walking pace back to the gymnasium. Kali continued laughing as she pushed the cart again. She knew her little sister was lying. Anyone could tell.

---

Joyce, Terry, and Mike were walking to a room where they had a pair of goggles. During the walk, Joyce remembered something, when Terry apologized to her about not finding Will. She never responded to that. So, without a second thought, she said to her, "It's alright." The woman looked at her with a puzzled look, making her finally look at her. "You escaping with your daughter and not...finding my son..." She nodded. "It's okay." She had a look of surprise when she heard that. She would've thought that she was be pissed at her, but...

"But Joyce-" she said before getting cut off.

"I-I get it. Kali's your child, you never want her to get hurt or even killed. You love her so much, Jane too. They're very important to you." Her surprised expression amplified. "I know how much you love your children, just as much as I do." The brown-haired woman then placed a hand on her own chest. "I will never stop to make sure my sons are alright. Otherwise, I...I wouldn't be here right now." Terry covered her own mouth in shock. "You may have not found my son, but you gave me some hope that he's still alive. You're also still alive, so that's good too." She chuckled a bit nervously and had an equally nervous smile to her. "I don't want my friend AND my son in constant danger in a place I don't even know about, so..." She shrugged, her smile disappearing. "Yeah, it's alright, Terry. Believe me."

Terry had no words at the moment. She thought she knew Joyce well since high school, but that...that was unexpected. Since her son was missing for nearly a week now and she was getting frantic every day of the week, she'd figured that she would be mad at her for breaking a promise for her own daughter. She was actually relieved that she forgave her. They were both mothers whose children was their source of happiness and would do anything to protect them. She smiled, forgetting about the situation she was in for a second, and hugged her friend to the side, making her smile as well.



"You're the best friend any woman my age could have," she said to her, making her chuckle a little.

Mike was eavesdropping, looking at the women enjoying themselves. He liked Terry's smile, so he smiled as well.

...

They were finally in a science room. The brown-haired woman began taping around a pair of goggles with some duct tape. "This should keep it dark for you," she said to the freckled boy. He nodded. She looked at him, smiling. "You are such a brave boy, do you know that?" He didn't answer, but felt a bit humbled by what she was saying. "I mean, everything you're doing for my boy...for my Will...for my family..." She sniffed, almost about to cry tears of happiness. "Thank you." He nodded at her, smiling a little. Terry, hearing that, did feel bad since she was doing that in the first place. However, Mike would do a better job than her.

The dirty-blonde-haired woman turned to Mike and grabbed his hands. "Listen, Michael," she said to him, the boy giving her his full attention. "I'm going to be there with you the whole time. If it ever gets too scary, just let me know, okay?" He nodded once again, feeling calm and comforted by her presence. "Are you ready?"

He honestly felt anxious for what might happen. Still, everyone was depending on him, especially Jane's mother and Jane herself, and Will's mother too. After taking a deep breath, he answered, "Ready."

---

In the gymnasium, Jane and Kali hooked up the hoses, then Jane went back to carry the ends over the pool. Kali turned the water on, the water getting into the pool. Lucas was measuring the temperature. He shouted to the teen, "Colder!" She turned one of the knob wheels to lower the temperature. Measuring it again, he shouted, "Warmer!" She turned another one of the wheels to raise the temperature. He measured one more time and gave her the thumbs-up to have her stop. "Right there!"

Soon, Jonathan and Hopper came back with a bunch of deicing salt. They ripped open the packages and began dumping the salt into the

filled pool. After a few packs, Dustin tested to see if the water was floating enough, getting an egg from the cafeteria and placing it in the water. It sunk, meaning that more salt was needed. He got the egg out of the pool and gestured the two to pour more salt into the pool. They did so and Dustin tested again. He dropped the egg and it didn't even sink, just floated on the water. He and his friends smiled at that. Now the pool was ready.

Jane placed her walkie-talkie on a cart they founded in the gym's supply closet, between the egg carton Dustin got and a towel to dry off Mike when he was done. She turned the knob to make it spew out static. When it did, she left it alone.

Mike and the women arrived in the gym shortly after. In the background, Terry and Hopper whispered to each other about a plan, if they find Will and/or Barbara. Meanwhile, the boy took off his shoes, then his socks, then his jacket, and finally, Jane's watch. When he took that off, he gave it to her, the girl putting it back on her wrist. Joyce gave him the taped-up goggles and he put it on, completely blocking his vision. He took a deep breath, feeling nervous about this. However, people he trusted and trusted him were around him, so it wasn't that bad compared to the facility.

He dipped his toe into the water, feeling the lukewarm water. With the help of Terry and Hopper, he finally stepped into the pool and walked as far as he could in it. When he felt them remove their hands from his arms, it cued him to lay down in the water. He lowered himself in the water and finally laid on it, floating on it and not saying a word. Finally, he began his search for Will.

Everyone saw the lights in the gymnasium flicker before completely shutting off. The teens and the two boys looked at each other in awe, Terry also sharing the same expression as them since this was something new to her. The freckled boy took slow and steady breaths as he continued to search for Will and Barbara. It took him a minute, but finally...

...

*He opened his eyes and saw the darkness and liquid floor. He looked around, making sure nothing else was with him. When the coast was clear,*

*he sighed and began walking around. After half a minute, he began to worry, seeing neither Will nor Barbara.*

*He looked back and saw something not too far from him. He didn't like the look of it and it looked like a female was there, so he asked...*

...

"Barbara?" Kali's eyes widened and she held in a gasp, hoping she was still alive.

...

*He began walking towards her, feeling anxious about her. She looked weird, being on the ground and being covered it...whatever it was. When he finally got close to her, his eyes widened. Her skin was a pale green and she was slimy and stiff. He saw a strange-looking slug come out of her mouth, making him feel sick and cover his mouth. He stepped back and breathed heavy, aghast at what he was seeing.*

...

The lights in the gym flickered again, then shut off again. The telekinetic boy began breathing heavily, now worrying everyone. "What's happening?" Kali asked.

Her adoptive sister shrugged, looking very worried. "I-I don't know," she answered. Now the teen girl didn't know what to expect.

She looked at Mike and asked, "I-is Barbara okay?"

...

*"Sh-she's..." he began to answer, shaking in fear. "Dead..." He looked away from her and shouted, "She's dead. She's dead!"*

...

"She's dead...she's dead!" He kept repeating that, his voice being quaky. Kali could almost burst into tears hearing him say that, covering her mouth and trying her best not to cry...but why? Her best friend...was dead...

Terry felt terrible for her adoptive daughter, but had to calm the boy down. She instantly grabbed his hand and said to him, "It's okay, Michael. It's alright, I'm here, we're here..." Hopper and Joyce also grabbed his hand to calm him down as well.

...

*"She's dead!"*

...

The adults kept trying to calm him down the best they could, the boy's breaths being whimpers. "It's okay, we're right here, sweetie. Right here," Terry continued.

...

*"I got you, Michael," he heard her say in a soothing voice, echoing in the darkness. "Don't be afraid, it's okay. I'm right here with you, I'm not going to disappear." It almost reminded him of another time with her.*

---

*As a very young boy, he was crying after one scientist gave him what was a scary face to him. Seeing her sorrowed face, she cooed, "Awww~, come here." He walked to her and she lifted him up, making him bounce a little. "It's okay, Michael," she said to him in that soothing voice. "I got you. Don't be scared. He won't harm you." He stopped crying, looking at her friendly face. He felt at peace.*

---

*Just like now. He took deep breaths and closed his eyes, listening to her voice.*

...

"It's okay, Michael," she kept telling him, now in a whisper. "It's okay."

...

*"You're safe, you're alright, just hang on, sweetie."*

*Finally feeling at peace, he opened his eyes up again and saw a wooden and webbed-up fort labelled as...*

...

"Castle Byers..." Joyce's eyes widened as well as Jonathan's, looking at Terry. She gave them a reassuring look. Everyone, even Kali, hoped Will didn't end up like Barbara...

...

*He slowly approached the fort and went inside. He looked around before seeing the boy, Will Byers, laying there, in rest. He looked pale and he was shivering. Mike knelt over him, getting a good look at him. It had to be him, right? That body from the quarry...*

*Except it was really him.*

*"Will?" he asked to wake him up.*

...

"Will?" Joyce gasped, covering her mouth and hoping for the best. Jonathan's mouth hung open, hoping the same too.

...

*He saw the boy's eyes open up a little, looking up at him. His breath was shaky...*

...

And it was heard through the walkie-talkie. Everyone's eyes were enlarged, looking at each other in utter shock. It had to be him, it had to be...

"M-Michael..." Joyce said, her voice shaky. "T-tell him that...I-I'm coming...that..."

...

*"Mom is coming..." he heard her say. He nodded and looked down at him.*

*"Your mom...she's coming," he stated to him, placing a hand on his shoulder.*

*In a few seconds, Will wearily replied...*

...

*"Hurry..." Joyce, Jonathan, and Jane were the most emotional. Both the Byers looked like they were going to cry while Jane looked shocked and covered her mouth. She heard his voice...he's alive...her best friend...her first friend she ever made...was alive...*

*"N-now...tell him to...to stay where he is. We're coming, honey! We're coming!"*

...

*"Just stay here," he told the boy. "Stay here...a little longer." The boy didn't reply to him and suddenly, he saw the fort slowly dissolve. He looked around in shock before seeing Will dissolve as well. His breathing became heavy again and he stood up, looking around for him. "Will?" He saw nothing, heard nothing. "Will?!" Now he was extremely worried, grasping the sides of his head. He lost him. He couldn't believe he lost him...*

*"Will?! Will?!" he kept yelling out. It was no use...*

...

Hearing his yelling, everyone became extremely worried for him again. Instantly and without warning, he sat up from the pool and instantly took off his goggles. His nose bled and he breathed heavily as Terry instantly hugged him, calming him down. "It's okay, Michael. I got you," she whispered to him, calming him down. "I got you. It's okay. You've done great." She then gave him a kiss on the side of his forehead as he looked distraught. He couldn't find him. He lost him...Terry said it was alright, but still...he lost him.

...

Later, Mike sat with the kids on the bleachers, Jane drying him up with a towel. Meanwhile, the adults talked to each other about the

plan to get Will back. "So where's this fort?" Hopper asked the Byers.

"U-um, in the woods, behind our house," Joyce answered.

"He used to go there to hide," Jonathan added.

He nodded as he put on his jacket and sheriff hat. He looked back at Terry and told her, "You hold fort and look out for these kids." She nodded and he began to leave, causing the Byers to follow him with baffled looks. She sighed. She just knew that Joyce was going to convince him to have her come with him, maybe Jonathan too. Whatever happens, she hoped Hopper would tell them how dangerous it was for them to get back over there. She knew that they would amp up the security, so they had to be extra careful.

She hoped they could make it back alive.

She looked back at the kids, seeing Jane talk to Mike with a serious look on her face. She smiled, glad that they were getting along-well, she was sure they did to begin with. Seeing them together like that...it almost made them look like a couple.

She scoffed at that thought. They were just kids. Still...if they were to become a couple, she would be supportive of it.

---

As Jonathan frustratingly got inside the school after being told to stay by his mom, the same man from earlier was parked far from sight in the disguised van. He could see Jonathan going in and Hopper and Joyce driving away. He stated into his walkie-talkie, "The police chief and the woman are leaving, probably to the facility."

"*And Teresa?*" asked Brenner's voice through the device.

"Didn't see her. I'll assume she's still inside. Any orders?"

"*Don't do anything unless I or Dr. Brenner say something, alright?*" Dr. Wheeler's voice asked.

He nodded. "Understood, sir."

---

Back in the labs, both looked at each other, smiling. "Just until the police chief and the other woman get here and we deal with them..." Dr. Brenner said.

"We'll get ready to hit the middle school," Dr. Wheeler replied.

Both of them stood up from their chairs and walked out of the room they were in together. "Do you, perhaps, have any idea of how we are going to deal with them, Ted?"

The man with the glasses gave him a concerned look. "You're asking me, Martin?"

He stared at him. "Yes I am. Is there something wrong with that?"

Martin always either brushed off the fact that he made mistakes or never mention them and talk about it in the most obvious way. Ted knew him well enough to see that sort of pattern in his behavior. He didn't blame him though. Things got more complicated and he'll do the best he can to solve it all with him. He shook his head. "No, not at all, Martin."

---

Outside of the gymnasium, a distressed Kali was sitting against a wall with a painted tiger and American flag. Jonathan joined her, sitting right next to her. Silence roamed between them. The teen was deep in thought about Barbara, thinking about their argument and how that was the last she's seen of her. She always regretted that, arguing with her. Barb had a good point and she deflected it because she wanted to sleep with Steve.

God, what an idiot she was.

Her anger was not only directed to herself for being a bitch to her, but also at the monster. She didn't deserve to be killed by it...she never did...that's why Kali began thinking...

"We need to go back to the station," she thought out loud, making the auburn-haired guy look at her concernedly.

"What?" he asked.



"Your mum and Hopper are like bait. That monster...that damn monster, is still there, almost killed my mum several times when she was there." She shook her head and clenched her fists. "We can't sit here and let it get them. My mum was lucky, but...I don't know about them." He looked away from her and nodded. She was right. His mother and the chief, they were walking right into danger, especially since Terry told them how dangerous it would be to get back to the labs again.

He instantly thought of what to do. "The blood theory," he stated. "We never tested it out." He then looked at her again. "You wanna?"

She nodded, her face serious. "Let's finish what we started, Jonathan. Let's kill it."

"And your mom?"

She sighed. There was the fact that her mother was out to be killed, but... "Those men won't find her. I know it." He nodded, which made her nod back. They both stood up and walked to his car to drive to the station, since they forgot about them there.

---

Once the two teens arrived at the station, they went inside and carefully sneaked past the only officer there, who was smoking and listening to the dispatch on the radio. They went into Hopper's office and saw the box of traps. Jonathan got it and the two began exiting the station, but not before Kali got a fire extinguisher, just in case...

---

On the property of the labs, Hopper and Joyce were doing their very best to make sure they were out of sight as they possibly could. After all, Terry did warn them that they might amp up the security since she and Hopper came for a visit. They hid behind the side of the building, then slowly crept up to the entrance. The man made sure the coast was clear before entering in.

Just when they were walking to the entrance, the lights burst out, blinding them a little. They were suddenly surrounded by a plethora of soldiers yelling at them to put their hands up. Both felt petrified and shocked that they were caught, but Hopper was the best at

hiding it. He slowly raised his hands up and whispered to the brown-haired woman, "It's okay...just let me do the talking..." She slowly nodded and had her hands up as well. That didn't change the fact they both thought they'll die...tonight...

---

**Done! What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**I hope I handled Joyce accepting Terry's apology well. I always planned for her to forgive her. Like one of my reviewers said, she knows how much a child means to a mother.**

**I love writing Terry and Mike's interactions. I just think they're so cute~!**

**Just one more episode and we're done with Season 1! When I do publish the last chapter to end off Season 1, I'll take a break from this to work on my other fanfics. I will come back to this for Season 2 though!**

**Oh yeah, I do plan on continuing this into Season 2, for those who were asking. How can I not?! I couldn't just end with Season 1! There's more to come!**

**Now, with all of that said, keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

## 22. It Was Strangely Easy

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

Placed in an isolated room and cuffed to a chair, Joyce kept yelling, begging to be let free. She kept fearing for her life, thinking about what Terry said before about their shock torture. It wasn't until Dr. Wheeler entered into the room alone that the fear amplified. But with it was pure anger. Just seeing his face made her feel the need to break out of these handcuffs and punch him in the face, just for the shit he's done.

"Your son," he said to her, facing her without sitting down. "We know that you came in contact with him. Can you tell me when and how you did so?" He then took off his dress jacket and draped it over his chair before sitting on it.

"What...?" she asked in a faint voice.

"When and how did you come in contact with your son, Joyce Byers?" He laced his fingers together, waiting for an answer. She didn't answer, just looking fearful and angry at him. He sighed and kept his calm. "Listen, Joyce." Just hearing him call her by her first name left a sickening feeling to her stomach. "There are a total of six people being taken this week. Six. This thing that took your son, the thing Teresa Ives described to you over the phone..." Her eyes widened when he said that. How did he know? "We don't truly understand it. We don't know of its motives, why it takes people. However, its behavior is predictable. Like any predatory animal, it eats and never stops to get more to eat. That means it will take more sons, more daughters. Dr. Brenner and I, we both want to save them. We both want to save your son." Her fearful yet angry expression came back. He was treating her as if she was a goddamn idiot. "However, without your help, we can't do that. So, can you please-"

"Stop," she replied in a cold voice, causing him to actually stop and look a bit taken aback. "I know who you are, I know who is Dr. Brenner is too. You two are the most maniacal bastards I've ever heard of." Now his face turned stone-cold. "You two took my boy

away from me! You both left him there to die! You both faked his death! We had a funeral for him, we BURIED him! You both even sent my friend there to die looking for him! So why the HELL should I help you?!" He kept his cold expression, not answering. "Go to hell, you and your pal Brenner. Go. To. Hell."

His lips drew into a line in defeat. Really, he thought this could work, thinking that she had little to not involved much with Terry and Hopper. Boy, was he sorely mistaken...

...

In another isolated room in the building, an agent tasered Hopper, making him scream and sink to the ground. The blonde woman and Dr. Brenner were there, watching him suffer as they needed answers, especially Brenner. "Now, Jim Hopper, what do you know?" the doctor asked him.

The man heavily breathed and answered, "Did I stutter? Sorry, but I told you...I know everything." He got tasered again, feeling sharp pain course through his body as he threw up a little, wiping his mouth.

"What do you know?" the woman asked him.

He caught his breath and answered again, "Let's see, you guys do experiments on these kidnapped little kids, then treat their parents to shock therapy." All of their faces turned cold. "I also know you guys went a little too far this time and messed up in a big way. I mean, really messed up, big time. Trying to cover your tracks by killing Benny Hammond, faking Will Byers's death, making it look like a little boy just ran away..." He paused to scoff, the two agents looked guilty while the doctor didn't even flinch. "Even with that attempt at trying to kill off your ex by sending her in that hole, you messed up on that too." That caused him to be tasered again, grunting at the excruciating pain.

"Who do you work for?" Brenner asked in a voice as sharp as nails. "Teresa?"

He shook his head. "She's pretty much my partner-in-crime. She was

curious, I was curious, put two-and-two together..." The doctor just knew Terry would spill the secrets after her near death in the world of that hole. It was only natural, since she was going to be dead, nonetheless. She just knew she was going to be hunted down and neutralized. "Also got this friend in the Times that can blow this case wide-open." He chuckled, but stopped as he was tasered for the fourth time. The two agents then hauled him over to a chair, making him sit in it.

One of the agents prepared a needle as he said, "You're just a small town cop that's had a really bad week. One too many pills left you feeling like hell."

The woman and the doctor stared at him with sharp glares, the doctor saying, "You have made a mistake coming back here. Do you know what can happen to you?"

He did, and he still went anyway. "I do. I think it goes like this..." He looked up at him. "You and Ted are going to let me and Joyce go, then give us anything we need, and finally let us find her son. We'll forget any of this ever happened."

The woman looked amused. "Is that so?" She then looked at Brenner for support. He didn't move a muscle at all, but felt very annoyed. He hoped Ted's plan will go well.

"Yeah...that's so."

---

Back in the middle school, Terry, walkie-talkie in hand to communicate with Jane and the boys, was roaming through the hallways to make sure no trouble is about. She looked very intently in every room, just to make sure those agents from the lab don't get in in any way. She had told the kids that she was doing this and that they should stay put in the gym. They could go to the cafeteria if they were hungry, but need to go back to the gym and eat there.

Funny thing, she never saw Kali and Jonathan. She did look outside and saw that Jonathan's car was gone. She figured they would depart, probably to test out that blood theory. God, she hoped they will be alright, especially since it was night and stakes were high tonight...

...

The kids were sitting on the bleachers of the gym, Mike sitting next to Jane, Lucas sitting one bench behind them, and Dustin the last bench. Feeling impatient, Jane looked down at her watch. It's been half an hour, where were Jonathan and Kali? She sighed and decided to take out her walkie-talkie to talk to her mom. "Hey, Mama," she said. "Where's Kali and Jonathan? Have you seen them?"

...

The woman heard her through the walkie-talkie and answered through it, "I looked outside a few minutes ago. His car is gone."

...

*"They could be going after the monster."* Jane looked a bit puzzled at first, but like the rest of the boys, looked shocked. Now she knew about the...

"Demogorgon..." Mike muttered. Jane hoped her sister will be alright...

---

Jonathan and Kali finally arrived at his home with the traps and supplies in the back. They got out of the car and opened the trunk to get their supplies. Kali got the gasoline and the fire extinguisher while Jonathan grabbed the whole box. The Indian girl closed it as they both went inside and placed them on the ground. They looked at each other, knowing what to do next.

...

They've done numerous things to prepare:

They put the light bulbs back on the Christmas lights so they can act as a warning that it was coming.

Jonathan nailed down the bear trap while Kali loaded her gun with ammo. She knew the gun was useless to kill it, but she and Jonathan thought that bullets can slow it down. Better to test that than nothing.

Kali poured gasoline across the hallway so that the matches could be useful to kill it.

Jonathan hammered nails into a bat at the warehouse so that he could attack and possibly kill the monster with that.

He also checked to make sure the lighter was working so that the gasoline wasn't poured down for nothing.

Kali helped Jonathan set up the bear trap, keeping her foot on the spring lever so that his arm couldn't be caught in it. He finally put the tongue of the trap down to keep it in place.

Jonathan set a yo-yo as a substitute for a tripwire and tied it to the bear trap carefully.

They were finally done. They were armed and the traps have been set. All they needed to do was bleed...

---

In the isolated room with Hopper, Dr. Wheeler came in and asked his comrade, "How is it going?"

"The man's stubborn," Brenner answered.

"Yeah, that's one way to put it," Hopper added in a sarcastic voice. "How about we make a deal? We forget all of this ever happened. And those three kids, those two boys and that girl..." He paused to point and look at Brenner. "Your daughter..." He didn't even blink when he said that with much emphasis. "You leave them alone. And Terry, your ex and an ex-employee here?" He felt a bit hurt when he decided to say, "Deal with her quietly. Don't traumatize the kids." He had hoped that she could live, but this was a life-and-death situation in reality, not in a James Bond movie. "All that I'm asking is that you two let me and Joyce do what Terry failed to do: find her son. Is that too much to ask?" He scoffed and chuckled a little. "I could really use a smoke right now. You two got any on ya?"

Brenner looked at Wheeler since he was the one with the plan. Hopper wasn't as resistant as he first thought he would be. Hell, if they didn't know where Terry and M11 were, he'd give up the

location. Now the plan can go as expected...

...

Joyce was still sitting the room cuffed. She began to worry for Hopper and even Terry. She hoped to God they were going to be alright.

Suddenly, the door opened and not only an officer that will uncuff her came to sight, but also the police chief himself, smoking a cigarette giving to him by Brenner. She looked surprised and relieved that he was alright. When she was getting uncuffed, however, she became curious.

...

"What's happening?" she asked Hopper as they were arriving to the bio-hazard zone.

"We came to an agreement," he answered. "It was strangely easy." Joyce looked baffled. Easy? How can making a deal with dangerous people be easy?

He was thinking of that very same thing. They didn't even ask him for the location of Mike or Terry. That made him awfully suspicious, but he and Joyce were doing this now, so he couldn't back out.

He continued, "Everything that's happened now and gonna happen soon, we don't talk about to anybody. If you want Will back, this place had nothing to do with it. That's the agreement, understood?"

She slowly nodded, then another question popped up. "Wh-what about Terry?"

His reply was a whisper. "Hopefully, she'll be fine."

She looked skeptical. "Hopefully?" She didn't like the sound of that...

"Just trust me." She just wanted to find her son, so she nodded again. She still hoped her best friend was going to be alright...

Swear to God, she hoped she will.



...

After putting on the hazmat suits and getting flashlights, Hopper and Joyce finally departed into the hole, hoping to find Will however they can. The doctors and the rest of the agents and soldiers were outside, walking to their respective vehicles. Martin gave a skeptical look to his fellow doctor. "Trapping them in the hole?" he asked him. "I thought you told me that was a mistake."

He nodded. "Yes, but you were trapping Terry," he answered. "I may not know her as much as you do, but one thing I know about her is that she's smarter than those two. Unlike her, they'll never make it out alive. They lack the cleverness and intelligence." Martin thought he had a good point. Terry was indeed smart. Joyce and Hopper, not so much. Now it made sense to him why they trapped them in the hole.

The soldiers got into their army trucks while the agents were in black-sheeted cars, including the doctors. Before the doctors signaled the driver to go, Dr. Wheeler had the walkie-talkie on him and said into it, "Dr. Wheeler here. Dr. Brenner and I are going to depart with the rest of the soldiers and crew."

---

*"Send in the agents in your van and tell them to be discreet, not giving themselves away. Tell them to find and capture M11 and Teresa Ives. Do not harm or kill them, however, just hold them until we get there. Is that clear?"*

The man nodded and answered into it, "Yes, sir." He then exited the van and went around to open the back doors of the agents waiting.

---

When he was done, Dr. Brenner gestured the driver to go to the middle school. He did, making all the other vehicles follow them to capture M11 and Teresa Ives.

---

The man said to the agents, "Listen up. The doctors, soldiers, and agents are on their way to here. Dr. Wheeler says you all can go inside and look for M11 and Teresa. However, they said not to harm

or kill them, even Teresa. Just to hold them captive until they arrive. Is that understood?" The agents nodded as the man gestured them to go. They got out of the van and began to discreetly approach and enter into the school, being armed and hoping no one would see them.

---

With knives in their hands, Kali and Jonathan looked at each other, the blades on their palms. "Remember..." Jonathan said.

"Straight into Will's room when it comes," Kali stated.

"Don't step into the trap."

"Wait for it to touch the yo-yo string."

"Then we light it up." He lit up his lighter, then capped it and put it in his pocket, letting out a deep sigh. "Alright, ready?" She nodded as they both looked down at their exposed palms touching the blade. "On three...one...two..." He looked at her determined face. He guessed she didn't want to back out at all. Why would she? He wouldn't do it. "Three." They finally cut their palms, fresh blood leaking out of their cuts.

---

"Th-this is crazy, you guys!" Jane said to her friends, now the three of them standing up while Mike still sat on the bleachers, looking at them. "We can't just wait around here!"

"Jane, we're still fugitives," Lucas rebutted. "The bad men are still looking for us and your mom."

"And we don't know where exactly your sister is either," Dustin added.

"Well, Mike can find her."

He shook his head and pointed at him. "Jane, look at him." She looked back to see him looking at them. He did look pretty tired from finding Will and a dead Barbara. "We should still stick with the chief's plan."

Lucas nodded. "Exactly. We stay here, keep Mike outta sight, and keep him safe. Remember, that's the most important thing." She didn't want to argue with that, looking away and crossing her arms. "Besides, I'm sure Kali's safe. She's with Jonathan."

"And she's a bit badass now, so..." the curly-haired boy added before walking away.

Now the tomboy looked puzzled. "Wait, where are you going?"

"To the cafeteria to get some pudding. I swear, Lunch Lady Phyllis hoards that shit like the end of the world's coming."

She now looked baffled. "You're kidding me."

"Mike needs to be recharged!" Lucas decided to join him, much to Jane's annoyance. Oh well, at least they were considerate of him.

She looked at the freckled boy and said with a gesture, "Come on. We're going to eat." He nodded and got off of the bleachers to follow her out. She got out of her walkie-talkie and said through it, "Mama, we're going to the cafeteria now...to get some food."

...

"Okay, sweetie," she replied into the walkie-talkie. "Be careful." She then gave a science lab room a look. She saw nothing. She closed the door and suddenly heard something shuffling. She froze and looked back. She didn't hear that noise for the next few seconds, so she shrugged it off and continued looking around.

---

Back in the Byers home, both teens had their cut hands bandaged thanks to the first-aid kit in the bathroom. They both sat on the couch, waiting for the monster to come. They both heard a faint creak, stiffening up a little. "You hear that?" Kali asked.

"I-I think it's just the wind," Jonathan replied. She sighed and kept looking around, feeling anxious about the monster coming. At least this night, tonight, she will kill it.

Breaking the minute-long silence between them, the auburn-haired

guy said to the Indian girl, "I'm sorry." She looked at him with a puzzled look. "About Barbara." Her blood ran cold. Right...Barbara...she looked away from him. "I always see you two together. I guess...you guys were close."

She nodded slightly. "We were, since kindergarten. When my mum's not around, she was so supportive of me, through some hard times I had, some tough decisions I had to make. We always had fun together and I've always helped her when she was having a hard time. You know, we have our arguments, but what pair of friends don't?" Jonathan nodded, liking to hear about what it was like having a friend. She then turned to him. "You went to Hawkins Elementary, right?"

He nodded again. "Yeah."

"You went on the field trip to the Indianapolis Zoo?"

He nodded yet again. "Yeah, I remember that."

She then smirked a little. "You ever heard of that one girl that accidentally fell in the water where the elephants were?"

He suddenly knew where she was getting at. "Wait, were you...?"

She nodded. "Yeah, I was the girl."

He chuckled. "Now I have to hear the full story. How can someone fall right into the Elephant exhibit like that?"

She chuckled as well. "I can't remember how, but I think some asshole pushed me over and I got into the water. I go up for some air and then I see an elephant about to go into the water. I just felt panicked, you know? Like I feel like I was going to die that very day."

He looked a bit skeptical, but kept his grin. "Elephants are friendly giants, y'know."

She looked at him, grinning as well. "Yeah, tell that to 11-year-old me." He laughed and she continued, "And then, I see Barbara's hand reach out to me, so I swam to it the best I could, since I couldn't swim, and grabbed it. She pulled me up with some help from our

chaperones and she asked if I was alright, if I was hurt, you probably know the rest. She even snatched a blanket one of the chaperones had for a picnic and draped it over me. She saved me from getting trampled by a goddamn elephant. She's been pretty protective of me ever since."

Jonathan's grin disappeared when he said, "That was why she looked sour at you at that party, right?"

Frowning, she nodded again. "Yeah..." She sighed. "I was an idiot. You didn't see it, but we argued about Steve before she decided to go back to the pool and..."

His face turned serious, his hand on her shoulder. "Hey, at least you're avenging her now." She looked at him. "You're going to kill the thing that murdered her. She'd probably be thankful."

Smiling a little, she nodded. "Yeah...she would." She couldn't believe she just talked about Barbara with the school loner. Oh well, they were getting along. Why the hell not?

He removed his hand from her shoulder and looked down. "I never had any friends," he stated.

She held back a scoff. "I mean, you were always known as the school loner, even in elementary and middle school."

He nodded. "Right."

"You'd rather observe everyone else than speak with them?"

He shrugged, nervously smiling a little. "Pretty much."

"Why, exactly?"

He shrugged again. "Just...didn't feel the need to be social. I always liked to observe people and...analyze what they're doing and probably thinking. Always been in my DNA, I guess." He then scoffed, thinking he sounded stupid. "God, here I go, rambling about how weird I am."

She chuckled a little. "You're not weird, just different."

He grinned at her. "You say different, I say weird."

She shrugged. "Suit yourself."

Suddenly, there was a pounding at the door, breaking the friendly air between the teens and making them look at it. They definitely didn't see the lights blinking...who the hell was it?

"Jonathan?!" yelled out...Steve, much to their utter shock and confusion. "Are you there, man?! It's Steve!" They both looked at each other with such baffled faces. "I just wanna talk to you, man! Just open up!" He continued banging on the door. Both had no idea what to do at the moment...answer or not answer...

Needing this to be over with, Kali stood up and mouthed, "I'll get him away." He nodded as she approached the door, unlocked it, and opened it. Yup, it was Steve Harrington, but with a bloodied-scraped half of his face thanks to Jonathan earlier. "What do you want?"

He looked surprised to see her there. "Kali? What the hell-"

"You need to leave." There was a sharpness to her voice and her serious look towards him. However, he wasn't going to go away that easily.

"I'm not trying to start anything, I'm trying to-"

"I don't care, now leave."

"Listen! I-I-I messed up, alright?! I messed up and I'm sorry!" His face was begging for her to forgive him, making her look sad and have conflicting feelings. "You're right, I'm an idiot. Idiot Steve Harrington. My idiocy caused unwanted bullshit to happen and I'm sorry. Please, Kal." She really, really wanted to forgive him since everything he was saying sounded very genuine, but...

In a few seconds, he realized her bandaged hand and looked worried. "Wait, what happened to your hand?" he asked as he grabbed it, eyes widened at the sight of blood. "Holy shit-"

She instantly yanked it out of his hold and instantly answered, "Nothing, Steve. It was an accident."

"An accident?" He sounded skeptical. "What's going on?"

"Nothing."

His eyes then widened when he thought of something. "Did he do this to you?!"

She gave him a shocked look. "What?! No!"

Suddenly, he was pushing to get in out of protection. "Let me in!"

She tried to push back. "No, Steve! Go!"

"Let me in, Kali!" He finally got inside and saw not only Jonathan just standing up, but also the Christmas lights, the nailed bat, and the gun. He was absolutely dumbfounded. What the hell was going on?! "Wh-what the hell-"

The auburn-haired guy stormed to him and tried to push him back out. "You need to get out of here," he told him sternly and coldly.

"W-wait, but what's with all this shit?!"

"I'm not asking! I'm demanding you to get out!"

As the two began to argue, Kali's patience was running thin. God, she just wanted this to be over with! So, she grabbed her gun, released the safety, and pointed it at her boyfriend. The two guys separated from each other, looking stunned to see her with a gun, especially Steve since it was pointed at him. "Steve, get the hell out of here," she demanded in a rather cold voice, colder than before.

He raised his arms up and looked terrified. "W-w-w-w-wait! Kal?! What the hell?!" he exclaimed.

"I'm not joking around. You have five seconds."

"J-j-just put the gun down!"

"I'm doing this for your own good."

"WHAT?! How the hell is it for my own good?!"

Suddenly, the lights began flickering, but only Jonathan noticed, him saying, "Kali."

Both didn't notice or hear him though. Kali started counting down, "Five..." Steve kept crying out "no" in fear, backing away a little. "Four...three..."

The lights continued flickering. "Kali!"

"Two..."

"KALI!" Jonathan's loud voice got her attention. "Look at the lights!" She looked up, her eyes becoming wide.

"Shit..." she muttered under her breath. "It's here!"

"W-wait, what's here?!" Steve asked. Jonathan then got his bat and both were back-to-back, looking around.

"Where is it?!"

"WHERE IS WHAT?!" the jock exclaimed.

"I-I don't know!" Jonathan responded to the teen girl.

"WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?!" The two other teens didn't reply to him, making his irritation and confusion amplify even more. "WILL SOMEONE EXPLAIN ALL THIS SHIT TO-"

He got cut off by the ceiling breaking and revealing the monster. All of the teens backed away in horror. "Oh God..." Kali muttered, feeling the need to shoot it even though it was immune to bullets. "Go, go, go!" Jonathan was running and Kali grabbed Steve's hand to get him away.

They ran in the hallway, Jonathan jumping over the trap and yelling to Steve, "JUMP!"

He and Kali did, though he was constantly shouting, "Ohmygodohmygodohmygod..." They went into Will's room and slammed the door shut. While Kali and Jonathan got ready, the brown-haired guy kept shouting, "Wh-WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!"



## HOW DID IT GET HERE?!"

Both of them turned to him and yelled, "SHUT UP!" He did so, feeling intimidated, not by them, but the situation he got himself into. All of them tried to keep quiet, Jonathan's light out and lit up as they heard the monster screech. They heard it moving towards them. Just a flick of the yo-yo and it was done. They waited, waited for that cue.

It never came, since the lights stopped flickering and went back to normal. The two teens were flabbergasted by this. "Y-you hear anything?" the Indian girl asked the auburn-haired guy.

He slowly shook his head. "No..." he replied as he capped his lighter. He slowly opened the door and slowly walked out with his bat out. Kali followed, then Steve. All of them saw the trap still in place like it was before. They couldn't believe it. How can it avoid it like that?! How the hell...?

---

**Stopping here! How was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**I hope you guys don't mind me not writing Hopper and Joyce going to save Will. Like I said in the first chapter, I only write scenes I feel are necessary to write. Writing them finding Will is not necessary because there would be no changes in those scenes.**

**I also hoped I wrote the scene with Kali, Jonathan, and Steve well. I don't write action often...**

**Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you in the next chapter!**

## 23. The Bad Men, They Found Us!

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

Terry kept walking through the hallways, still keeping patrol. She hadn't heard from the kids for a bit of a long time, but she guessed that meant everything was safe. That was great. Nothing seemed to be suspicious or clue into trouble. As long as they were alright, she could-

All of a sudden, she saw a couple of figures with flashlights enter into the hallway. By instinct, she hid behind a wall. She carefully peeked over to make sure it wasn't the kids.

They weren't.

They were adult figures, one of them asking, "You see anything?"

"Nothing," the other replied.

She looked away and mouthed out, "Shit!" They found her...or him. Whoever came first. Either way, now there was trouble.

She looked around for a place to hide and founded a janitor's closet. She quietly walked to it and slowly opened the door. It smelled like chemicals that made he feel a little nauseous, but she would deal with it if it meant hiding from them. She saw the lights go closer, so she went in and closed it quickly. The room was too dark, making her wish she had a flashlight so she knows where to hide there. She heard the footsteps and voices draw closer, making her clench harder on the door knob.

She felt something on the side of her shoulder, so she had one hand feel it. It felt like a broom or a mop. Whichever it was, it was the best manner of defense she's got. She grabbed it and waited for the voices and the footsteps to go away. She heard them fade away, then completely gone in two minutes. She sighed in relief, letting go of the broom and touching the wall, only to feel something jab her palm.

She exclaimed as quietly as she could and figured out something. She let her hand feel it. It was a light switch. She sighed in relief again as she flicked it up. The light nearly blinded her, but at least she could see. It was a messy place, but it was the janitor's closet. Of course it was. Now she knew where to hide if she got into a situation like this again. She looked to see if there was a more capable way of arming herself. Nothing. She sighed. At least she tried...

As she switched the light off and exited the closet, she looked at her walkie-talkie. Since the agents from the labs were here, the kids needed to be warned...

---

Back in the Byers home, the teens avoided the bear trap and slowly went into the living room. It wasn't there either. Jonathan and Kali were absolutely baffled. Was it truly gone? It couldn't be...

As they continued looking around, Steve kept muttering like he was going insane and stormed to the phone to call 9-1-1. However, his girlfriend noticed that and walked to him, ripping the phone off of his ear and throwing it away. "No!" she shouted.

He gave her a completely aghast look. "Are you CRAZY?!" he exclaimed.

"It's going to come back and the authorities won't help it! So leave!" He stayed still, looking at her as if she was going crazy. She didn't yell again, but demanded in her cold voice, "Steve, go. Now." She looked goddamn scary to him, being so serious and cold, like she was going to kill him or something!

He ran out and scrambled to his car. He got out his keys and tried to get in. Due to his fear of what just happened and what he's seen, he accidentally dropped the keys. He swore under his breath and got them. He unlocked his car and opened the door. As he was going to go inside, the light flickering inside caught his eye. That meant it was back, right? Kali was in there, trying to kill that monster. His girlfriend...in there...going to face that thing...

...

The two teens whipped around, ready for it to come on. "Come on..." the girl muttered.

"Where are you, you son of a bitch...?" the guy also muttered. They kept looking around and still wasn't seeing it. Damn it, where was it?!

Suddenly, all the lights stopped and caused a blackout in the home. Both teens stopped looking around. They had no idea what this meant. Was it there?

Kali saw it appear behind Jonathan, making her yell, "Jonathan, look out!" He looked behind him, but didn't react in time to have it pounce on him and release his grip on the bat. She gasped, seeing it drool on him and open its mouth. The guy never looked so horrified in his life.

She didn't want him to die, so without a second thought, she shot at the monster, yelling, "Go back to the hell you came from, you son of a bitch!" It looked at her. Even without a face, she could tell it wanted to kill her. It got off of Jonathan, who was still stunned by what just happened to him. She knew the bullets were useless, but she kept firing at it. "You killed Barbara! You took his little brother! You almost killed my mum several times!" It kept coming to her, still being slowed down but unaffected by the bullets. "I won't let you kill my friend!" The guy looked at her with surprise that she even called him her friend...

She ran out of ammo, making her swear under breath and look for something else to attack it with. All of a sudden, she heard a battle cry and saw a figure hit it with the nailed baseball bat. She thought it was Jonathan, but it was...

"Steve?!" she exclaimed. She was in utter disbelief. He came back...and was kicking this monster's ass.

He swung at it again, making its chest bleed a little. He went around it and shouted, "Come on!" It did go for him, but he swung at it again, making it scream. He hit it again, making it stagger back. Another hit, it staggered back even more. He twirled the bat and hit it one more time, making it scream louder as its foot caught into the bear trap. It latched onto its foot, the monster trying to get free from it. Kali looked absolutely shocked. He did it, he made it go into the trap.

"It's in the trap!" he shouted to Jonathan, who was up and better now after spitting out its saliva.

"Now, Jonathan!" the teen girl also shouted to him. He nodded as he ran, got out the lighter, lit it up, and threw it to the gasoline-covered floor. The floor caught on fire and began to incinerate the creature. All the teens shielded their eyes from the fire, its screaming making their ears ring.

Kali ran to the fire extinguisher, grabbed it, and ran to the fire. "Get back!" she shouted at the guys, making them go behind her as she sprayed the extinguisher to cease the fire. Everything went black for a few seconds, the teens coughing because of the terrible mix of the extinguisher and the smoke. When everything cleared, they saw sizzling flesh on the bear trap.

"Wh-where did it go...?" Steve asked.

The girl shook her head as well as the other guy's. "No...it has to be dead," she replied stubbornly.

"Yeah, it couldn't have survived that..." Jonathan added. Thankfully, it was out of their reach, for now.

All of them had to ease themselves up, relieve the tension they had in their bodies. It was over, hopefully, it was all over.

In a few seconds though, they saw the lights glowing one-by-one. Still prepared for battle, they felt tense again, following the lights lighting one-by-one. They then heard...a voice. They couldn't decipher it, so they didn't know if it was a monster or a person.

A person...

They continued following the lights, Jonathan realizing why they were lighting up as they were. He asked, "Mom...is that you?" While Steve looked at him like he was crazy, Kali looked concerned. How would he know about...? "Mom?"

"Jonathan?" they all heard her respond. His eyes were watering at the sound of her voice. Both Kali and Steve looked surprised. How the hell did that happen?

---

In the Upside Down, Joyce stopped in the middle of the living room there, shocked that she could hear her son, even though she couldn't see him. God...deja-vu hit her. It was like when Terry communicated with her yesterday, except at this moment...she was Terry.

"Come on, Joyce," Hopper said. She snapped out of her shock and awe as she followed him out of the house.

---

The teens went outside and saw the street light flickering. They all knew, even Steve, that it wasn't the monster doing it.

What Steve doesn't know though, was that it was Joyce and Hopper in the Upside Down.

---

The kids were in the cafeteria, Lucas and Dustin getting the chocolate pudding for Mike and themselves. Jane and Mike sat together at a table. "JANE! WE FOUND THE CHOCOLATE PUDDING!" the curly-haired boy shouted.

"OKAY!" she shouted back. She lowered her voice to speak to Michael. "Are you feeling any better, Mike?" He just shrugged, making her sigh. He did go through an intense experience, she assumed.

"Jane, what's...'pu-ding'?" he asked her, curious of what he was going to eat to feel better.

"Pudding's a chocolate goo you eat with a spoon." He looked a bit disgusted at her description. He didn't like "goo". "Don't worry, after all of this is over, you can eat actual food instead of junk food and leftovers. My mama's an awesome cook. She can make you whatever you like."

He smiled, thinking the only nice adult in the labs being an awesome cook was cool. "Ice cream?"

She scrunched her face up a little. "I don't think so, but she can try."

"Eggos, too?"

She giggled a little, smiling. "Yeah, but actual food too." She sighed again, continuing, "You know, when this is all over and Will's back and you're not a secret anymore, my mama will get you an actual bed for the basement. Or you can take my room if you want, since I'm usually in the basement anyway." He smiled again, at the thought of living with Jane and Terry. "She'll take care of you, better than the bad men did. She'll be like your new mama and Kali can be like your older sister." He liked the sound of that too.

"And you will be my sister too?"

She instantly shook her head. "Uh, no, no."

His smile disappeared, now looking confused. "Why 'no'?"

She felt her heart racing a little faster and her face heating up a little. "B-because...this is different..." She nervously moved her fingers around a little.

"Different?"

She sighed again, looking away from him. "I mean...I, uh..." She shrugged. "I don't know." All these feelings for him, the feelings she had earlier back in that bathroom, came back now. She didn't know how to deal with them. Could she be...?

Mike saw the look on her face, feeling concerned. "Jane."

She looked at him. "Yes?"

"Friends don't lie."

That was right. She had to stick to that. The feelings she had felt like they were weighing down on her chest, so she needed to let them out in some way. She took a deep breath and said, "Okay." She finally looked at him in the eyes, her feelings amplifying a little. "I...I was thinking...maybe..." She took another deep breath and finished, "Maybe I can take you to the Snow Ball."

He looked curious. "Snow Ball?"

"It's this school dance where you dance to music and eat things and

stuff." She got her hand off of the table to...hold his. Now his heart was racing and he felt his face heating up a little. "I've never been to one, but I know...I know that you don't usually go with your brother..."

"N-no...?"

"Well, you can, but...it's weird, really weird." He failed to see how that was weird. "You go with someone...you like..."

His eyes lit up a little. "A friend?"

She shook her head. "N-no, someone you really like...someone that's more than...a friend." She squeezed his hand more, their eyes locked with each other.

Now Mike got more curious. "Wh-what is someone that's more than a friend?"

"Someone you wanna do this to." She then leaned in, closed her eyes, and kissed his lips without warning. His eyes widened for a second at the feeling of her lips on his. It felt...good. Really good. He closed his eyes and took it in.

She broke it, opening her eyes and seeing the look on his face. He looked very surprised at first when he opened his eyes and touched his lips, but then he looked happy, smiling. She smiled as well. She thought that maybe it was weird for him, but she was glad he enjoyed it. She did too...it was her first kiss...and she didn't regret having Michael be her first kiss at all. It felt like she was in heaven for those few seconds they kissed.

"Jane?" her mother said through the walkie-talkie in a whisper, breaking the romantic air the two had. "*Jane, sweetie, are you there?*"

The girl looked at her walkie-talkie, slowly getting it to her mouth and replying into it, "Y-yeah, Mama?"

*"Are you and the boys still in the cafeteria?"*

"Uh...yeah?"



...

Terry slowly walked through the hallways, making sure she wouldn't get caught. "Listen, I need you all to get out of there."

*"Wait, what? Why?"* Jane sounded so worried.

"I saw a couple of those 'bad men', you call them..."

...

Both her and Mike looked shocked and even scared. *"I hid away from them, but I think there's more of them. You all need to get out of here fast, you understand?"*

Before she could answer, she saw lights flaring from the windows. She thought that... "I-I think Kali and Jonathan are back here. I see the lights."

...

The woman mouthed again, "Shit!" She then saw an exit door and replied, "I'll try and get them. Just go to the nearest exit."

*"A-and will you escape, Mama?"*

"Of course I am." She then walked towards an exit door and saw the woods across the field. "The woods, run into the woods, and meet me there. Alright?"

*"O-okay, Mama."*

"I love you, sweetie. Over and out." She finally ran through the exit door and ran across the large field into the woods.

From the corner of her eye, though, she saw a couple of army trucks and black cars. She looked horrified. That wasn't Jonathan and Kali...

She swore under her breath, hoping the kids, especially Jane and Michael, were alright.

...

Jane looked at a horrified Mike, standing up as well as he did and putting the walkie-talkie in one of the pockets of her overalls. "We need to get Dustin and Lucas," she said to him, the freckled boy nodding.

"Wait, what about us?" Lucas asked. The two saw the two boys carrying a lot of cans of pudding.

"We need to get outta here, fast!"

"Why?" Dustin asked.

"The bad men, they found us!"

Both boys looked shocked and horrified, dropping the cans of pudding. "Shit...!"

...

Outside, the black cars and army trucks stopped. Everyone exited and went into the school, both buildings, to be exact. Some agents met up with others there. "You see Teresa or M11 at all?" one of them asked.

"No, we're trying," one of the agents stated.

Soldiers and agents looked through classrooms and other rooms, not seeing a trace of the woman or the telekinetic boy. Soldiers and a few agents stormed into the gymnasium with both of the doctors. They both saw a filled-in kiddie pool, knowing that M11 was there.

Some agents and soldiers went into the cafeteria. They saw cans of pudding scattered all over the floor. They knew both of them were here, so they kept looking.

...

The kids ran through the hallways to one of the exits, panting in terror. "H-how the hell did they find us?!" Lucas whisper-shouted.

"I-I don't know, but they knew we were in the gym!" Jane whisper-shouted back.

"Lando, I'm tellin' ya!" Dustin added in a whisper-shout.

They all suddenly stopped when they saw soldiers burst through the door, shining their lights at them. "We got 'em!" one of them shouted.

The kids immediately turned, Jane shouting, "Gogogogogogogo!" They entered into a classroom, but more agents were there, so they got out of there and continued down the hallway, but then more agents and soldiers, including the blonde-haired woman, appeared and pulled their guns on them, specifically Mike. He didn't let up though.

He tilted his head down, looking angry at them as he strained himself to freeze them and crush their brains. They all were frozen stiff, their eyes bleeding. The kids were very freaked out about this and looked at Mike. His nose began bleeding and some veins became visible on his face as he focused solely on crushing the inside of their heads. Several seconds later, everyone heard a disgusting squishing sound as all of the agents and soldiers fell down, completely dead. The kids were absolutely awed by this.

Mike breathed heavily, feeling more worn and weak than he did before. He then collapsed onto the ground unconscious, worrying the kids and making them crouch down to him. "Mike?! Mike, are you okay?!" Jane asked, almost sobbing as she nudged him to stir him awake. "Mike?!" Her eyes were watering, looking up at the two other boys. "Wh-what's wrong with him?!"

"H-he's probably completely drained now!" Dustin answered, his voice matching the worry and horror on his face.

"B-but he won't wake up!" She kept nudging him, hoping he would stir. "Mike! Mike!" She began to cry, tears streaming down her face. "Mike, please! Wake up!" The boys looked forlorn at the sight of her crying and shouting like this. They've never seen her this way, and they wished to make her feel better. "MIKE!"

---

Terry hid behind a tree in the woods, panting to catch her breath from running. She figured she was far from the school. She just realized something though:

She never specified where in the woods she and the kids should meet.

"Damn it!" she shouted through her teeth as she slammed her fist on the leafy ground. She looked at her walkie-talkie, wondering if she should contact them to make sure they're alright. She wanted to, but at the same time, maybe she would call at a bad time and blow their cover...

Damn it, what would she do...?

---

Jane checked his pulse, relieved that he was still alive. She then heard him breathe, though it was faint. "H-he's barely breathing," she stated in a sobby voice.

"Come on, let's go," Lucas said.

"Leave him," said...Dr. Wheeler, making the kids look up and see not only him, but also Dr. Brenner, a few soldiers, and an agent, appeared at the end of the hallway. The doctors approached Mike, but the kids stepped in front of his unconscious body, making them stop and look coldly at them.

"Step away from the boy," Dr. Brenner demanded in a cold voice.

"No!" Jane yelled to him.

"Step away from the boy, Jane." She felt intimidated to hear him call her by her name again. However, she wouldn't take it. He may be her father, but he was one of the bad men.

"If you want him, then kill us first!"

"Yeah, that's right!" Dustin added.

"Eat shit!" Lucas added.

Suddenly, three soldiers appeared behind them and each grabbed one of them, startling them and having them struggle. Jane screamed a little and shouted, "Get off!"

"You idiot!" the African-American boy yelled.

"Get the hell off me!" the curly-haired boy also yelled.

As the kids yelled and struggled, Dr. Wheeler sat Mike up while Dr. Brenner just observed. The man in the glasses held his son's face and asked, "Michael? Michael Eleven, can you hear me?" The boy finally stirred and opened his eyes a little. His vision was blurry, but he saw...

"Dad...?" he replied weakly.

He smiled and nodded. "Yes, it's your dad, son."

"I'm also here, M11," Dr. Brenner said, the boy slowly looking at him. "We're both here now." His face and his own father's were the last he wanted to see again.

He heard the kids struggling, looking to see the soldiers hold them tight. He looked distraught at that sight. Jane yelled angrily, "Let go of him, let go of him, you son of a bitch!"

"No...no..." the freckled boy whimpered out, looking away before his dad made him look at him and shushed him.

"You're just sick, Michael, but the doctor and I, we'll both make you feel better. We'll take you back home and we'll do our best to make you feel better. Home is where we can make things better and no one else will get hurt." He gave him a smile to comfort him, though it was a creepy one to him.

"Your father is right, Michael Eleven," Dr. Brenner added, the boy looking at him. "We three can go back home and nobody else will get hurt. Not your friends, not Terry." All of the kids' eyes widened at the mention of her name. "What do you say?" The boy didn't like him, or his dad. He knew he made empty promises...his dad too. There was no way he was going back.

Never.

Suddenly, Jane's walkie-talkie whirred and a muffled voice asked through it, "*Jane?*" The girl looked aghast as well as the other boys, including Michael. "*Sweetheart, are you there?*" The doctors finally recognized the voice.

It was Terry's.

Brenner looked at Wheeler with a face that asked his question for him. The man nodded, the white-haired man approaching Jane, making her look more and more terrified.

---

"Jane, do you copy?" Terry kept asking, though she was getting no answer. She sighed and put the walkie-talkie down. She just knew it. She knew she was contacting her at a bad time. Now she wished she'd never done it.

But maybe there was the possibility she dropped it at a panic...maybe-

"Teresa," Dr. Brenner's voice greeted, making her feel horrified. *"We've been acquainted once again."* She stood up and backed away from the walkie-talkie, looking around for any ambush. Now she was extremely worried for her daughter, Mike, and the kids. Did they-

*"Give that back!"* she heard Jane shout through it. She felt so terrified that she was instantly near tears. *"Give my super-comm back, you bastard!"* The woman didn't even care that she heard her daughter curse.

Her daughter, and her friends, were in danger.

---

Martin chuckled and looked at his struggling daughter. "Is that any way to treat your own father, Jane?" he asked her. She only gave him a sharp and angered look.

*"J-Jane?! Sweetheart?!"* Terry exclaimed through the walkie-talkie. *"Baby, are you okay?!"*

The white-haired man grinned, walked away from her, and said into it, "She's fine. The rest of her friends as well."

---

Terry, leaning against the tree with her walkie-talkie near her ear, knew that was wrong. Lying son of a bitch. "What about Michael?"

---

The freckled boy looked shocked to hear her say his name to Brenner. "He's fine as well. We're not low enough to harm children."

---

She scoffed. Who the hell did he think he was speaking to? "If you do anything to them-"

*"We won't. Not yet."* Her breath became heavy and shaky. *"I'm going to give you two choices."*

---

"Give us your location and nothing happens to our daughter and her friends. We'll take in M11 and you, but do no harm her and them."

The thought of having her mother being taken away as well as Mike terrified Jane to no end. "No! Don't do it, Mama!"

Brenner stopped at the end of the hallway and faced the kids and his fellow doctor. "Or..." He pointed at the man carrying the curly-haired girl and wagged his finger towards himself as a gesture to bring her to him. He did so, Jane now even more terrified and struggling even more. "Our daughter can be taken in for our little project."

"NO! NO!" she yelled at the top of her lungs, trying her best to break free.

---

The woman gasped, about to cry and sob. *"She was proven incapable before, but our ways of testing will make sure she isn't."* She heard him chuckle, he had the gall...to chuckle about this. *"At least it won't be just be Ted's son, but also my own daughter. Our children tested and used for the better."* Tears ran down her cheeks as she began to sob. She couldn't even fathom the thought of...no. No...

---

The boys were absolutely horrified and angered at the thought of Jane being handed over to the bad men and treated like Mike, so they struggled to break free and kick that soldier's ass. "LET HER GO, YOU SHITHEAD!" Lucas shouted from the top of his lungs.

"YOU'RE NOT TAKING JANE AWAY FROM US!" Dustin also shouted from the top of his lungs.

Michael was the most horrified though, muttering again, "No..." All the things he went through there, all those painful memories...he didn't want Jane to go through them too. He clenched his fists, feeling both distraught AND furious. They were going to hurt her...like they hurt him...

---

Terry sank down to the ground, still crying and sobbing, covering her face and wiping her tears at the dreadful thought of her daughter being that torturous experiment. *"I'm going to give you ten seconds. If you don't answer, you'll never see our daughter again..."*

---

"If you do and give us your location, nothing will happen to her or the rest of her friends," Brenner finished.

Tears streamed down the tomboy's face again, still struggling to break free. "NO! MAMA, HELP ME!"

---

*"MAMA! HELP!"* Hearing Jane's cries for help made the dirty-blonde-haired woman feel so distraught, sobbing more.

"Jane..." she whimpered, sniffing and wondering what to do. For God's sake, she didn't want Michael to go back there, but Jane being one of their experiments... "Oh my God..."

---

**Stopping right here. What do you guys think?**

**I've been WAITING to write this chapter ever since I started writing this fanfic. There's two reasons why:**

**1. MIKE AND JANE FINALLY KISSING! DUH! I swear, no matter how many times I watch that scene, it never fails to make me fangirl. Never. This was no exception. Writing Jane kissing Mike makes me fangirl like that scene did. :D**

**2. Brenner and Wheeler catching the kids and Brenner being the sociopath he is. I figured he would be the man to blackmail his own ex-wife with his own daughter by telling her that he'll take her into his experiment with Wheeler and never seeing her**



again. Of course Jane and Terry are absolutely horrified by that. The boys'd be angered as all hell and Mike...oh boy. Jane going through what he did, that's never a pleasant thought in his mind. Thought that would make for some good drama and tension.

Keep supporting this fanfic! The next chapter will be long and end Season 1 of this fanfic! I'll see you guys then! ;D

## 24. Goodbye, Jane

Here's the final chapter of Season 1! Enjoy!

---

"Ten..." Brenner started counting down.

"NO! LET ME GO! LET ME GO!" Jane shrieked. "LEAVE MAMA ALONE!"

"Nine..."

"WE'LL KICK YOUR GODDAMN ASSES!" Dustin screamed out.

"Eight..."

"LET HER GO, YOU TERRIBLE SONS OF BITCHES!" Lucas also screamed.

"Seven..."

The boys continued swearing and threatening the white-haired doctor while Mike began to cry. He didn't want her to suffer like he did. No...she was...she was really nice and...

She was more than a friend to him.

"Six..."

"Jane..." he said in a shaky voice, trying to stand up to get her, but Dr. Wheeler sat him back down.

"Five..."

"Hey, son," his father said to him, tightly holding his face. "When that woman doesn't answer, you won't be alone. You'll share the same room as the doctor's daughter and you'll have a friend there." Mike still wasn't convinced. It was bad there...Jane being there wouldn't help the fact that the labs were a bad place.

"Four..."

He shook his head, replying with a cold, "No." The man looked taken aback by that. "No." He then looked at the curly-haired girl. "Don't hurt her..."

"Three..."

Dr. Wheeler made him look back at him and say, "Listen, son-"

"No!" He then whipped his head towards the man holding a struggling and crying Jane, straining himself, even if it hurt more, but he didn't care.

---

Terry was between a rock and a hard place. Sacrifice herself and have Michael be brought back? Or never see her daughter again and have her suffer with him? God, she didn't know. "Two..." She was in a panic. Who did she care about more? Her own daughter or the boy who she hasn't seen in a decade?

---

"Son-" Dr. Wheeler said in a stern tone before Mike tilted his head to the right and snapped the soldier's neck. The dead soldier fell back and released his hold on Jane, the girl looking aghast and covering her mouth. She looked at him, seeing fresh blood underneath both of his nostrils.

The sight of her horrified and crying face left him feeling so heartbroken. He looked at the white-haired man and said sharply, "Don't...hurt...Jane." She gasped, her breath shaky.

"Mike..." she murmured under her breath.

---

Terry heard that. She figured Mike killed the man that held Jane...with his powers...

---

The agent and the rest of the soldiers, except those that held Lucas and Dustin back, pointed their guns towards him. Dr. Wheeler signaled them to put them away, the people doing as so. Both him and Brenner looked awed. The boy seemed to be very fond of Jane...so fond that he used his power to save her, despite being

extremely tired.

"Incredible..." the white-haired man said, awed that he managed to do that while still being tired.

"Michael...?" the dark-haired man said to the boy. He looked at him with angered eyes.

"Don't...hurt...Jane," he repeated in a much sharper tone. The man sighed, looking at Brenner. He had only gotten one idea-

Suddenly, the lights began to flicker, getting everyone's attention. They then suddenly heard the wall behind Brenner, making him and even Jane turn to see the wall breaking. All the kids then realized what was coming out of it.

Once the hole broke, screeching was heard and a frightening figure came out of it. Horrified, Jane said in a breathy voice, "The Demogorgon."

Everyone let go of the kids, Brenner and Wheeler backing away while Jane ran to Mike, who collapsed on the ground in weariness. As the soldiers and agents opened fire, Dustin carried Mike and they all ran away as far as they could from the bad men.

---

The sound of gunfire and familiar screeching made Terry even more horrified than she was before.

The monster was back...what Jane called the "Demogorgon"...

It was back.

Now she had a reason to go back there: to save her daughter and the boys from that beast. "Jane, Mike, kids, hold on..." she said to herself as she stood up and began to run, hoping she wouldn't get lost.

---

Both of the doctors looked aghast as they saw the monster deflect bullets like they were nothing and tear away at their soldiers and agent. They couldn't believe it. It was THIS powerful...

Suddenly, it turned and ran towards them, the men frozen stiff as it lunged for them.

---

The kids kept running away, far from the bad men and far from the monster. "Come on, this way!" Jane shouted. They went into another hallway and then into their homeroom.

"Don't worry, buddy," Dustin said to Mike. "We're getting there." Lucas locked the door as they all entered into the classroom. The tomboy pointed at one of the lab tables, so they ran to it. Lucas cleared the table of the equipment and Dustin laid him down. The boy was still breathing heavily. He looked at Jane, the two holding hands.

"J-just hold on a little longer, Mike," she told him, her voice almost sounding like a sob. "Th-they're gone...my papa...your dad...they're gone." He gave her a weak smile. "We'll be home soon when my mama comes. When she'll get you home...she'll get you a real bed, your own bed." His weak smile widened. "You can eat as much Eggos and ice cream as you want. And we..." She smiled, sniffing. "We can go to the Snow Ball together." He loved the sound of that, living with Jane and Terry and Kali too, eating Eggos and ice cream, going to the Snow Ball with her...he loved it all.

"Promise...?" he asked, his voice croaky and weary.

She sniffled and nodded. "I-I promise, Mike. I promise." Both of them looked at each other, hoping that each other will make it through and they can live together.

Suddenly, they heard a scream, making Jane gasp and release her hold on Mike's hands. All of the kids looked in horror as they heard the monster screech and roaring gunfire. When the noises stopped, the kids breathed heavily.

"I-i-is it d-dead...?" Dustin asked in a stutter.

Jane shook her head. "Bullets do nothing to it, Mama told me..." she answered.

Suddenly, the door to their homeroom was busted down by the monster, screeching. All the kids went to a panic, though Mike could barely move himself. "Gogogo! Get your wrist rocket!"

Lucas instantly got his backpack on another table and opened it with shaky hands. Jane and Dustin kept shouting, "Go!" He finally got it out, shouting, "I got it! Get the rocks!" Dustin did the job as he scavenged the backpack for rocks.

---

Although she was tired from running, Terry didn't care. She found and entered into the school, yelling, "Jane?! Michael?! Kids?!" They heard some shouting not too far from her. She also heard a roar. "Damn it!"

As she began running again and turned to a different hallway, she tripped and fell hard on her face. She screamed a little and stood up, feeling pain on her nose and teeth. "Ugh..." She placed her hand on her mouth and nose. What the hell made her trip over?

She suddenly realized the blood on one leg of her jeans, her eyes enlarging as she saw that she tripped over a murdered soldier. She almost felt the need to throw up. That thing, that monster must have done this...

If it did, it meant that...

She heard the kids shouting again, making her snap out of her thoughts. She couldn't go to them without something to defend them with. Trying her best not to gag, Terry crouched down to the soldier and looked for weapons she could use against it that wasn't a gun.

---

They all can see the monster walk into the room and roar at them, frightening them even more. "Dustin, hurry!" Jane shouted.

"Hurrying my ass off!" he replied to her as he gave her some of the rocks. She then gave them to Lucas. He grabbed one as his friends cheered him on to kill it. He flung the rock towards it, but it only hit it on the side of the head and angered it more. Getting even more panicked, Jane and Dustin kept yelling to kill it as Lucas got another

rock and flung it towards the creature again. It hit it, but still had no effect on it.

"KILL IT, OH MY GOD!" Dustin screamed as Lucas got another rock.

"KILL IT, KILL IT!" Jane also screamed out. He flung another rock at it again, still noneffective. Now it was getting close to them.

"IT'S NOT WORKING!" he shrieked.

"GET IT AGAIN!"

"USE THE MONSTER KILLER!" He grabbed that rock and placed it in his wrist rocket. He pulled it back as far as he could as the monster roared again. After taking a couple of breaths, he released and shot at it. It suddenly got pushed back up against the chalkboard. The three looked awed. His shot did that to it?

No, it actually didn't.

It was Michael.

The boy was off of the table and walked past them to approach it. His nose was bleeding again and his ears started to bleed as well. More veins were visible on his face and his eyes...god, his eyes. They all felt worried about him, especially Jane.

She walked towards him and said, "M-Mike, wait-" He pointed his arm behind him and at her, causing her to be pushed back and land against a cabinet. She screamed and groaned at the pain. The boys went to her side, but all of them looked at Mike.

The boy kept approaching it, with no fear or hesitation. He kept it against the wall with his power, the beat screeching and struggling to get out of his reach. He stopped in front of it. It was time...

It was time for him to kill it. In order to do so though...

He had be away from Jane, Lucas, Dustin, Terry...

Everyone.

Probably forever.

The door suddenly opened, Mike looking to see that Terry was there, with a gun and taser. Her eyes widened at the sight of him that close to the monster and his at the sight of her. "Michael...?" she asked, dumbfounded by this. The kids, especially the tomboy, were surprised to hear her voice.

He frowned. He didn't cry, but he sure felt like it...

Since he needed to say...

"Goodbye, Terry."

The woman's eyes widened. Will he...?

She knew the answer to that. God, she wished she didn't...

She instantly walked towards him. "No, Michael, please-" He raised his arm up and used his power to push her back into the hallway. She landed against a locker, grunting and sitting down. She looked at the boy. Joyce was right...he was such a brave boy...

Mike then looked back at his friends: Lucas, Dustin...Jane. He saw her began to cry. He hated to see her cry, but this...this was for her, and everyone else. He frowned and said solemnly, "Goodbye, Jane." More tears came from her face as she began to sob. She was going to lose Michael...she was going to lose him...

He turned back to the screeching monster. He was ready, ready to make the sacrifice. "You hurt them..." he muttered to it, shaking his head. "No more." He then raised his hand and made a claw motion with it. It shrieked as loud as it could, the three kids covering their ears. Even Terry was, despite not being in the room. Mike kept going, screaming as he began to tear a glowing hole inside of it. Everyone else closed their eyes and kept covering their ears. It then began to disintegrate into dark dust. Michael kept screaming until it fully disappeared...

...along with him.

Suddenly, all of the lights stopped flickering and went back to



normal, being on. Everyone opened their eyes and uncovered their ears. They all saw the dark dust dissolve away and the crease the monster made on the wall. Terry stood up and walked inside, looking around for the telekinetic boy. There was no sign of Michael at all...

The kids stood up and decided to look for him too. "Mike!" Jane shouted.

"Michael!" shouted Dustin.

"Where are you, Mike?!" Lucas also shouted.

"Mike! MIKE!" The girl's shouts were beginning to be sobs. "MIKE! WHERE ARE YOU?!" Terry looked absolutely distraught at seeing her daughter break down like this. She slowly approached her, bent down a little, and placed a hand on her shoulder, making her look up at her. She felt heart-wrenched to see her cry like this. Not since she took her D&D game away from her as punishment a couple of years ago and when "Will" died was she like this.

"Jane..." she said to her solemnly, looking like she will cry too. "I'm so sorry." She cried more and hugged her. The woman hugged her back tightly, letting her sob into her shoulder. The boys decided to join in on the hug too. They all stayed like that, for what felt like forever, because Michael sacrificed himself to save them all.

...

Later, outside of the school, emergency vehicles were around to help out the four of them. Carl's convertible drove as fast as it could until he and Becky saw Terry and Jane. "Stop!" the short-haired woman demanded. He did and they both got out of the car, Becky approaching them by running. The two females were sitting on an ambulance, blankets draped around them. Jane was holding the Eggo Mike gave her earlier, looking depressed about his disappearance. "Terry! Jane!" They both looked up and saw her running to them. She then gave them a tight bear hug. "Oh my God, you two...!" She sobbed. "I was so worried about you both!" They returned the hug, knowing that for sure.

Carl arrived, making Becky release her hug, and asked in genuine

concern, "Are you two alright?"

They both nodded, though Becky looked skeptical. "Don't lie to us, you two. You both...excuse me if I should speak freely Terry..." She nodded, making her deeply sigh and stated, "You both look like shit."

She was right. They did. The dirty-blonde-haired woman sighed and replied, "We've both...had better days..."

The curly-haired girl nodded. "Yeah..." she added in a weak voice. "Much better days..."

Becky sniffled and hugged them both again. Both Terry and Jane will never forget about what happened tonight, ever. It was a hellish night...in fact, this was a hellish day for the both of them...

---

It turned out Joyce and Hopper finally found Will, alive, and that he was at a hospital. The kids, the teens, the Ives sister, Carl, and Hopper were waiting outside of the room Will was in. Joyce and Jonathan were in there though, since they were his family. Lucas and Dustin were snoozing away, Dustin drooling on Lucas's shoulder, while Jane still looked down at the waffle. The thoughts of Mike kept roaming through her mind. He was gone...he was really gone...he couldn't be dead, right? He couldn't be...

Suddenly, the door opened and Jane broke out of her thoughts. Jonathan smiled at her and mouthed, "Come on." Her face lit up in sheer joy. Will was awake.

She stood up from her chair, put the Eggo inside her jacket, and shook her friends awake. "Guys, guys, Will's up! He's up!" she told them happily as she saw them stir awake and look disgusted that one was sleeping on the other. She didn't give them time to follow her, so she just sprinted off to his room.

"W-wait for us, Jane!" Lucas shouted as he and Dustin ran after her. "Jeez!"

...

She was the first to enter into the room. She saw Will right before her

eyes. He saw her too and smiled. "Wiiilll!" she cried out in joy as she ran and hugged him instantly.

"Whoa!" the auburn-haired boy exclaimed from the impact of the hug as he hugged her back.

"It's so good to see you again!"

He kept his smile and nodded. "Y-yeah, me too..."

Lucas and Dustin then entered the room, joyed to see their friend again. "Will!" they both shouted. Jane released her hug for him as they hugged him, making him hug back.

"Whoa, whoa, take it easy, you guys!" Joyce said in a playful voice.

"Yeah, take it easy, he's healing," Jonathan added as he entered into the room.

The boys released the hug and stood next to Jane. "Dude, you will not BELIEVE what happened while you were gone!" Dustin stated in excitement.

"It was insane!" Lucas added.

"You had a funeral," Jane stated.

Will looked surprised. "What?!"

"Jennifer Hayes was crying during it," Dustin added.

"And Troy peed himself!" Lucas also added.

The boy looked ready to laugh. "Really?!"

"In front of the entire school!" Jane also added.

"Yeah!" All the kids erupted into laughter until Will began to cough. The happiness in the air dispersed as the three lost their smiles.

When he was done, the tomboy asked, "Are you okay, Will?"

He nodded. "I'll be alright." He then let out a sigh. "It got me...the

Demogorgon."

They were surprised he called the monster the Demogorgon too. It was just as menacing as it. They all nodded. "We know," they all said.

"It's dead, thanks to our new friend," Jane elaborated.

He looked a bit puzzled. "New friend?"

They nodded again. "He stopped it...he saved us." She said that in a solemn voice since he was out of sight. "But he's gone now."

"His name's Michael Eleven," Dustin added.

"He has a tattoo with 'M11' on it. That's for his name."

Will looked even more puzzled. "Is that really his last name?" They all nodded once again. "Weird to have a number as a last name."

"Yeah," they all stated.

"We call him Mike, for short," Lucas said.

"He's basically a wizard," the curly-haired boy added.

"He has superpowers."

Jane shrugged and looked at Will. "He's basically a Yoda."

His face lit up. "A real Yoda?!"

"Yeah, he flipped a freaking VAN with his mind!" Dustin said.

"And he could crush brains!" the black-haired boy added. "These people were gonna shoot us-"

"Then he stared at them and made their eyes bleed..." Jane elaborated.

As they continued talking about what happened tonight, Will was enthralled by what was being told to him. He really missed out. At least he was out of that place alive.

Kali was there too and loved the sight of the kids, especially her little sister, being happy and having fun seeing him again. She walked to Jonathan and patted his shoulder. He looked down at her and smiled. "Jane and your brother are good friends, aren't they?" she asked him.

He nodded, looking back at them. "Yeah, they were friends since kindergarten."

"Wonder why we never became friends before this."

He shrugged. "We never really hung out before all this shit."

She had to agree. Only when Will and Barb were missing that they were hanging out with each other more, though it was to look for the both of them. Still, that didn't mean that they shouldn't be friends.

---

Exiting out of the hospital, Hopper finally got out a cigarette and lit it up. As he sucked in and blew smoke, he just realized something. The doctors didn't ask him for the location...

Because they already knew where they were.

He sighed. At least they were handled with. The kids, at least most of them and to his knowledge, weren't dead, Terry was still alive, everything was back in proportion...

For the most part.

He saw a black car with two suited men in it. The car stopped to Hopper and one of the men exited it, facing Hopper. He gave him a little note card. "Bring this to Teresa, then join us in the car," he said. The man sighed and took it, walking back into the hospital, but not before smoking a little more and discarding the cigarette.

---

In the waiting room, the Ives sisters didn't speak to each other. Becky did know that she went through a rough night, so being by her was enough. They both then see Hopper approaching Terry. When he was in front of her, he handed her the note card. "What's this?" she asked.

He shrugged. "Dunno, someone said to give this to ya," he answered

her. She grabbed the note card as he walked away and out of the building.

"The hell was that about?" Becky asked.

She shrugged. "I don't know." She then saw that it was a business card, showing the phone number and information about a man named Dr. Sam Owens. Curious, she looked at the back. It read:

*"You knew what you did. We all knew what you did. But how about I make an offer to you? An offer that doesn't involve you getting murdered? Call me. I'll be waiting. -Dr. Samuel Owens"*

She couldn't believe her eyes. This was an opportunity for her to not get murdered. She never knew this could happen. Since she thought that Martin and Ted were dead, they were going to run things in a more different way? She definitely had to give him a call.

---

It was one month later. It was Christmas and snowing in Hawkins. In the basement of the Christmas-decorated Ives home, Jane said in her usual soft voice, "Something is coming for you...and it's angry, hungry for your blood." The tomboy wore an green jacket with a white T-shirt under it and light-blue baggy jeans. "It's almost here..."

"What is it?" Will asked. He wore a brown, white, and gray sweater, dark jeans, and red and white sneakers.

"Gotta be the thessalhydra, dude," Dustin stated. He wore a plain blue sweater, dark-grey pants, and black shoes.

"No, it's not," Lucas replied, wearing a multi-colored long sleeve, dark blue jeans, and sneakers.

"It's telling you, it's the thessalhydra!"

"It happens to be..." Jane then got a character piece and slammed it on the table. "The thessalhydra!" The boys groaned.

"Damn it!" the curly-haired boy exclaimed.

The tomboy then looked at the auburn-haired boy. "Will the Wise, it's

time to take action!"

"Uh, I don't know what to do!" he exclaimed.

"Fireball him!" Lucas suggested.

Will looked at Dustin, who was a bit deep in thought. He then looked at him and smirked, saying, "Fireball that sonuva bitch."

He smiled as he shook and rolled the dice. They all cheered as they saw the dice roll to a... "Fourteen!" Jane interjected with a smile. As the boys continued cheering, she continued to narrate, "Will the Wise's Fireball was a direct hit!" She stood up to act like the thessalhydra. "As the Fireball hits the thessalhydra, it makes a-" She screeched and spread her arms a little like wings. "Then-" She sank to her knees on the ground and reached her hand to her friends. "Its clawed hand reaches for you one last time before..." She then collapsed on the ground.

The boys cheered happily, hugging each other and doing a victory dance/lap around the D&D table. Jane giggled at the sight as she stood up and sat back at the table as they were. "Dustin chops off all seven of its heads and places them in his bag of holding." The boy in question raised up his backpack with high and might confidence. "You carry the heads out of the dungeons in a victorious manner and present them to King Tristan, who thanks you for your bravery and service."

The boys gave her a puzzled look. "Whoa, whoa, whoa, we're not ending there, right?" Dustin asked.

She shook her head. "No, there's also a medal ceremony-"

"A medal ceremony!" He and the boys looked dumbfounded on how this went. "The hell you talking about, Jane?!"

She gave them a concerned look. "I mean-"

"The campaign was way too short too," Lucas added, sounding disappointed.

"I kinda have to agree," Will added.

She looked at all of them like they were all crazy. "It was ten hours!"

"And it didn't make any sense!"

The girl looked at the curly-haired boy sternly. "Really?"

He nodded. "Yeah, like, what happened to the lost knight?"

"And the proud princess?" the African-American boy added.

"And those weird flowers in the cave?" the auburn-haired boy asked.

She sighed, shrugging and feeling like she was left at a corner. She guessed she didn't had that planning mojo she did last month.

Suddenly, the door opened and Jonathan went down. He gave the kids a weird look. "Whoa, okay," he said. "You guys been playing this game for a while or you all just were just farting?"

The kids giggled at that comment. "Nah, that was just Dustin," Lucas stated, making him look at him objectively. He then began to sing, "Dustin farted~." He mimicked a fart sound, making Jane and Will giggle. "Dustin farted~."

"Yeah, yeah, very mature," Dustin said.

Jonathan gestured his little brother to come, so he stood up and carried his backpack. He high-fived his friends. "Bye, guys," he said.

"Bye, Will," they all replied off-sync as he got out of the basement. The two other boys then stood up and began playfully fighting each other because of Lucas's little song. Jane giggled, thinking they were getting pretty silly.

She then turned to the little fort she made for...Michael, her smile disappearing. Just seeing it all empty like that...she missed him. Lucas, Dustin, her mother missed him, but she knew she missed him the most. She always kept that set up for when he finally comes back...and when she tries to communicate with him. She just had a hope, a large hope, that he was still alive. She won't give up until she clearly knows he's still out there.

---



"You had fun?" Jonathan asked Will.

He nodded at him, smiling. "Yeah, I did," he replied.

"Hey, you two," Terry said to them, dressed in a creamy-white long-sleeved sweater, light-brown pants, and white slippers. She was sprinkling some colored sugar on a cake.

"Hey, Ms. Ives," greeted the brothers.

"Do you mind wishing your mother a Merry Christmas for me?"

"And for me?" Becky asked from the dining room, wearing a short-sleeved, flower-patterned dress. She sat next to Carl, dressing in a white-collared shirt and black pants. They were just visiting for the holidays.

They both shook their heads. "No way," Will answered.

"Of course not," Jonathan added.

"Merry Christmas, boys," Carl said from the dining room.

"Yeah, Merry Christmas," the short-haired woman added.

"Merry Christmas," Terry said.

"Merry Christmas," the two brothers responded as they began to leave.

"You won?" the teen asked.

"Yup," the boy answered as he got his coat off of the coat rack and put it on before putting on his backpack.

"Wait, Jonathan!" shouted Kali's voice from upstairs. They both stopped as they saw Kali, her hair in a braid and wearing a soft lavender dress, descend down the stairs with a present and gave it to the teen guy. "Merry Christmas."

He looked surprised and took it. "Uh, thanks..." he replied, feeling guilty. "I didn't get you anything-"

She shook her head. "Oh no, that's fine. I didn't want much for Christmas this year, anyway." She gave him a friendly smile. "Hope you like it so I didn't waste my money on it."

He chuckled a little. "I probably will. Merry Christmas."

She nodded at him. "Merry Christmas." The Byers brothers then left. She and Jonathan have been hanging out more as of late, getting the attention of the school, of course. I mean, Steve Harrington's new girlfriend and the school loner? Pretty odd combination. But they never knew that they were like each other and that they shared trauma together.

---

As the brothers got into Jonathan's car, Will asked, "So, you're friends with my friend's sister now?"

He nodded. "Yeah, that's right," he answered. "Buckle up." Both of them buckled themselves as the teen guy started the engine.

"It's just weird."

Jonathan gave him a puzzled look, but then thought about what he was implying, grinning. "Look who's talking."

He shook his head. "No, no, I don't mean it like THAT, I mean...like, you're friends with MY friend's sister. My friend is female, she's female..."

He laughed a little. Now that he mentioned it, it was pretty weird and coincidental. He's friends with a girl, his little brother's friends with a girl, and those girls were both related! Not by blood, but by law.

Will looked at the present Kali gave his brother and asked, "Can I open it?"

"Sure." The boy took the present and ripped the wrapping apart. He smiled as he showed his brother a box for a new camera. "Hey, look at that!"

A new camera? It wasn't surprising that she bought him that. Not

saying that he didn't appreciate it, because he did. "Pretty cool." They then drove away to their home to eat their Christmas dinner.

---

Kali walked to the living room and sat with none other than Steve Harrington, cuddling together and watching TV together. "Did you give it to him?" he asked her.

She nodded. "Yeah. I'm sure he'll love it."

He grinned. "He will. I know it." Both made a joint-spending to buy the camera for him. They didn't regret it.

...

Terry was done sprinkling the cake and placed a glass cover over it. She sighed in relief and wondered what the time was. She asked Kali and Steve over at the living room, "Hey, what time is it?"

Both looked at the clock, Steve answering, "Ten minutes 'til eleven."

She nodded and went to the kitchen to grab a plastic bag of food. "I should be back by a quarter past," she said to her sister.

Becky and Carl looked at her from the table. "Gotta donate to that party Jimmy told ya about?" the short-haired woman asked her.

She nodded. "Yeah."

She then smirked. "Y'know, you two are gettin' awful close lately."

Terry looked puzzled. "What?"

"You 'n Jimmy."

She scoffed and shook her head. "No way. We're just friends."

Becky nodded, but looked skeptical. "Mmm-hmm..."

She rolled her eyes and exited the kitchen. "You're impossible."

"Oh, but tell Jimmy I said hi!"

"Okay!" Terry then got her coat, put it on, and then put on some snow boots, taking off her slippers beforehand. She put the hood of her jacket up and went outside to get to her car.

---

She drove to a secret place in the woods, "Mirkwood", someone told her, and exited her car. She walked into the woods and in a few minutes, stopped where she saw a small box. She approached it and knelt over it. She set the plastic bag on the ground and flipped open the latch to open it. She kept it open as she got out a tub of vanilla ice cream from the bag and put it in there. She got out a container with bits of her family's Christmas dinner and placed it inside there as well.

"Hope ya didn't bring too much," said a man's voice. She tensed up a little and looked to see Hopper approaching the box and her.

"Just a tub of ice cream and parts of my family's dinner," she replied plainly.

"Good." He knelt to the box and put a container of food he got from the party at the police station and also a couple of Eggos in a plastic wrap. Terry closed the box and latched it back up, the two standing up.

"Should be enough for an entire day, right?"

He nodded. "Right." He then looked at her. "Just so we're clear, when we find him, you're not telling Jane." She sighed. She knew how much he meant to her daughter. "We don't want to get in trouble and have her get stirred up in it." He was correct. After calling Dr. Owens, she was able to live a normal life, the way it was before that week. Sabotaging that chance again...she won't do it.

Even if it meant finding him and keeping him a secret from Jane.

"I won't waste my redemption by telling her," she replied, looking at him. "It kills me, but I know I won't."

He patted her shoulder to comfort her a little. "You're keeping her safe by doing so, okay?" She nodded, the man releasing his hand from

her shoulder. "Come on, let's go." They both then left, leaving the box to be opened...

By Michael.

---

**And there ends Season 1. What do you guys think of this finale? Any mistakes or typos I might've missed?**

**Trust me, I got pretty emotional during the scenes with the kids, the people from the lab, and the Demogorgon, both in canon and in this fanfic. I hope I captured those scenes well.**

**Yeah, so Terry's also going to leave food for Mike...and maybe take care of him with Hopper next season...but how, you might ask? Wait 'til Season 2!**

**I'm still indecisive about whether or not I should have Will have a secret crush on Jane in the next season. The writing I did for him in this season is intended to be more ambiguous due to my indecisiveness.**

**So, I hope you guys enjoyed Season 1! Season 2 is coming...BUT...I need to take a break from this fanfic. Sorry, but I need to update my other fanfics since this became my main focus ever since I started it. No begging for me to start up Season 2. I'll start Season 2 when I'm ready for it.**

**With all of that said, keep supporting this fanfic although Season 1 is done is support is great! I'll see you guys in the next season, whenever it'll come! :D**

## 25. Boom

I'm BAAAAAAAACK! Before I say any more though, can I just...apologize to you guys for making you guys wait for a bit more than half a year for me to start up Season 2? I know I said I'll start it up when I feel ready to make it, but...

I've actually been ready to make it since March.

However, I gave myself ANOTHER fanfic to update along with trying to update another one without thinking it through fully. I couldn't work on more than two fanfics at a time unless I really wanted to stress myself out, so I had to work on those. Thankfully, I have completed them both a couple days ago and now I can finally start up Season 2 of this fanfic! After so long...  
T\_T

With all that said, here's the chapter to start it off! Enjoy!

---

It was October 28th, 1984. It was a clear night in the luminous Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Near a building, a parked van was there, a person in a blue wolf mask seated on the driver's seat. She was looking around, making sure the coast was clear. On her lap was a blonde-haired little girl, possibly around four, with two pigtails wearing pink overalls that were kind of dirty and a plain white shirt under it. She held up a baby-faced mask to her face, looking around like the woman was. She then looked up at the woman and asked, "When is Mommy coming out?"

The woman looked down at her and replied, "She'll be back. She always did, Holly."

Suddenly, they both heard the alarm in the building go off, looking at the entrance. Four more masked people got out of the building, one of them shouting, "Go, go, go!" Half of them was male, the other half female.

They all opened the doors to the van and got inside, closing them. Holly got right into one of the female's lap the second she saw her sit

down on the passenger's seat. The female buckled both her and herself up. The person at the wheel started the engines as police sirens were heard not too far. The person then drove the van away from the building and made a U-turn, being chased by a police car. It drove past other cars, trying to avoid them at all costs.

While that was happening, the people in the van removed their masks. An African-American woman was the one driving, a man with a blonde mohawk, an African-American man with a long black braid, and a girl with punk-rock hair were at the back. The girl Holly got onto was in her late teens with short-cut, shaggy, bleached hair with black tips was sitting at the passenger's seat. That girl had sky-blue eyes, pearly-white skin, and ashy-black eye shadow. Some ash could be seen on her lips too, working as lipstick.

The people in the back saw the police car coming closer as the driver tried to avoid other cars in the way. The man with the mohawk shouted, "Get 'em offa us, Mick!"

"I'm trying!" the woman shouted back as she pressed her foot on the gas hard, gaining the speed of the van.

"Go to the alley, on your right," the girl with the bleached hair said to Mick.

"Okay." The woman then swerved into the alley, losing one police car, but being in front of others. "SHITSHITSHIT!" The woman then tried to avoid them, only to hit a bunch of trash on the side. The girl with the bleached hair kept her serious look ahead though as the other girl with the punk-hair was laughing in amusement. Holly looked scared, the teen holding her tight.

Mick managed to avoid more cars and finally, drove into an empty parking lot, which was their path to their designated hideout. She sighed in relief as well as the three others from the back. The girl with the bleached hair didn't feel that way though, as they all heard more police cars coming right to them. The man with the mohawk looked back at them again. "Great, we got more, Mick!" he exclaimed.

"Damn it!" the woman shouted again as she picked up the speed. The van turned to another path, but the cop cars still chased it down.

The guy with the mohawk then looked at the teenage girl on the passenger's seat and shouted, "Do something!"

The girl sighed as she turned to Mick. "On the next right, there's a tunnel," she said to her. "Take it."

Mick nodded at her as she turned the van to her right and headed for the tunnel ahead. The cop cars still chased it as it entered into the tunnel, though the cop cars were lagging behind. The girl with the bleached hair then closed her eyes and slowly raised her free hand up to her face. She slowly turned it into a fist as she smirked and said, "Boom."

...

From the sight of one of the cops, the top of the tunnel collapsed, causing him to swerve and stop. It made the other cop cars stop as well and even crash into it. Little did that cop know that it was all...an illusion, since none of the other cops saw the rubble.

...

The van finally exited the tunnels. Everyone was relieved, the girl with the punk-rock hair cheering and clapping. The guy with the mohawk sighed in relief as well as the African-American man. Holly looked up at her mother, now smiling. "You did it, Mommy!" she said to her happily.

She smiled at her, stroking one of her pigtails and replying, "I did, Holly." The girl's nose was bleeding, so she wiped the blood with her black finger-less glove. As she was wiping her nose, there was a small tattoo on her wrist exposed...

The tattoo had a capital "N" and the numbers "0" and "8" on it.

---

In her room, Jane was sitting down at the little fort in the basement. Her curly brown hair was a bit longer, now completely covering the back of her neck. She wore a red and white-striped long-sleeved shirt with her usual brown coat over it, sandy-colored cargo pants, and dark-colored sneakers. She had her walkie-talkie in her hand, hearing



Dustin ask, *"Jane, you copy?"*

She pressed the talk button and answered, "Yeah, I copy."

*"Wait, what the hell are you doing on this channel?"*

She sighed and rolled her eyes. "Nothing. Now what is it?"

*"Lucas and I have six bucks in total. What's your haul?"*

Her eyes widened and her jaw dropped when she heard that. She completely forgot about that. She got out of the little fort and stood up, replying, "I-I don't know yet!"

*"What d'ya mean ya don't know yet?!"*

"Just hold on. Call Will." She then cut communications with her friend and ran up the stairs to go to Kali's bedroom.

...

When she arrived there, she looked through her drawers to find any ounce of money. All she found was her underwear and dresses. She dug into one of the drawer boxes and found her older sister's piggy bank. She closed the drawer, carrying it to the bed. She removed the plug and shook the piggy bank, some coins dropping off of it.

Suddenly, the door opened and revealed Kali herself. Her hair was now cut short and having a small, left-swept bang. She wore a white and black long-sleeved shirt, dark-navy skinny jeans, and white sneakers. She looked shocked to see her stealing her money like this. "What the hell, Jane?!" she exclaimed, making turn to her and look shocked that she was caught.

She quickly set the piggy bank on the bed and grabbed some of the coins, shoving them into her pockets. "I'll pay you back, Kali!" she shouted to her as she ran past her to get outside.

The Indian girl scoffed, thinking that she wasn't going to get away just like that. So she chased after her, running as well. "Jane! Get back here!" The two then got into a wild goose chase.

As they reached to the ground floor, they happened to run past their mother, Terry. Her hair was down and she wore a plain white-collared shirt, dark skinny jeans, and white shoes. She was carrying a bag of food and about to leave when she saw them run past her. That surprised her a little as she saw them run to the door of the garage. "Girls, what's going on?!" she asked them before they left. She sighed and shook her head, crossing her arms. She figured they were back at it with the chases they do with Jane troubling Kali in some way. "Figures." They were sisters, after all.

...

Jane quickly got her bike and ran out of the open garage door with it. "Jane!" Kali yelled. The tomboy then hopped onto her bike and rode away. Out of breath, the teenage girl stopped, seeing her adoptive sister ride away from the driveway and into the street. Kali raised her arms up before putting them back to her sides in defeat. "Bitch..." she muttered under her breath. She hoped she would pay her back. If not...well, she'll pay in another way.

---

Now with Jane joining up with Lucas and Dustin, the three arrived at the town's arcade and parked their bikes at the bike space. They suddenly heard a car horn, making them turn and see their friend, Will, waving at them and Joyce driving. The kids smiled at him and waved back at him. After talking with his mom, the auburn-haired boy finally got out of the car and joined up with them. Now the fun can begin.

...

They were finally inside. Dustin played Dragon's Lair while the others were watching. "Aw shit, you guys, I'm in uncharted territory here," he said to them.

As the dragon was attacking, the kids shouted to him off-sync, "Down!"

"Okay, okay!" He moved the joystick down and his character managed to dodge the attack.

"Right, right, right!" He moved to the right and avoided another attack. The cutscene kept playing until it showed a sword. Dustin moved up his joystick, looking confident, while the rest of the kids looked awed and wanting more of the action.

The kids then began clamoring about what Dustin should do before the curly-haired boy in question said, "Okay, guys! Shut up! SHUT UP!" He kept mashing a button, but then his character got burned. Jane gasped and like the rest of the friends, looked shocked at this. "No, no, NO!" He then began smacking the arcade machine. "God, I hate this overpriced BULLSHIT!" He then kicked it. "Son of a bitch!"

"Well, dude, you're not nimble enough," Lucas stated, patting his shoulder. "You'll get there someday." He then smirked and pointed at the screen. "'til then though, Princess Daphne's still mine." The beautiful, scantily-clad woman then appeared on the screen.

Jane scoffed. "She's the only reason why you bother playing this," she said to him.

Lucas scoffed as well and shrugged. "If you were a guy, you would understand." She rolled her eyes at him in disbelief, crossing her arms.

"Sure..."

"Alright, guys, cut it out," Dustin said. "I'm still topping Centipede and Dig Dug, so take that!"

"You sure about that?" asked a guy. All of them turned to see a teenage guy with brown hair, eating chips from a bag.

The curly-haired boy looked concerned. "Sure about what?" The guy gave him a look that gave him the answer, now his face turning into worry. "Oh God, no, no, no!" He and his friends then ran to the game of Centipede and Dig Dug, seeing Dustin in 2nd place for the both of them. "NO! WHAT?!"

Will's eyes widened when he saw the top score. "751,300 points?!" he exclaimed.

Jane also looked shocked to see the score. "Holy crap! That's

impossible!" she also exclaimed. All of them saw the name for the holder of the score, looking back at the guy.

"Who the hell's Mad Max?" Dustin asked him.

He shrugged. "Better than you." The curly-haired boy flipped him off.

"Is it you?" asked Will.

The guy scoffed. "You all know I despise Dig Dug."

"Then who is it?" asked Jane.

"Yeah! Spill it, Keith! Who is it?!"

Keith snickered. "You need information, I need something in return." He then looked at Jane, whose eyes widened again as she looked up at him, shaking her head.

"No, no way! You're not getting a date with her!" she replied to him.

The African-American boy sighed and said to her, "Come on, Jane. It's just one date."

She gave him a look of disbelief. "My sister is NOT a prostitute!"

Will did think it was a bad idea, so he added, "Honestly, I don't think it's a good idea."

Lucas gave him a look of disbelief. "Of course, you'd defend her."

"She's my friend! How could I not?!"

"Guys, guys!" Dustin shouted to break up the arguing. "We don't need to prostitute Kali for him." He then pointed at the guy. "He'd probably spread his nasty-ass rash to her whole family."

Jane nodded. "Right."

Keith gave him a look of objection. "Acne isn't a rash and it isn't contagious, you prepubescent wastoids!"

"Oh, I'M a wastoid?! She wouldn't go on a date with YOU!" the curly-

haired boy retorted.

"Yeah, you're not exactly Steve Harrington," the tomboy added.

"Plus, you make like, what? \$2.50 an hour?"

Keith rolled his eyes at them and said, "You two got nice perms."

They looked at him in disgust. "Oh, now you're making fun of our hair?" Dustin asked.

"This is all natural," Jane sharply said to him, holding the curls of her hair.

"Yeah, mine too!" Dustin did the same thing with his curls.

"So is mine."

"But we take care of our hair!"

Keith rolled his eyes again and told the tomboy, "I feel sorry for Kali about having you as her sister."

She huffed, putting her hands on her hips. "Kali wouldn't like you saying that."

He scoffed. "If that's true, then you know that Will has a crush on you, right?"

She gave him a weird look. How could someone like Will have a crush on her? She shook her head. "That's not true. He's my friend. We don't feel that way about each other. Isn't that right, Will?" She then turned to see him, but he wasn't there. That made her worry. "Will?" She then walked away to find him, calling him by his name.

When she did, Keith added, "Ah, that's typical." The two other boys looked up at him. "Girls are usually blind when some guy has a crush on them."

The two boys looked at him disapprovingly. "Just piss off, Keith," Dustin said.

"Yeah, just go, we need to play," Lucas added.

He snickered at them and said, "Don't deny that your friend has a crush on her." Both of them were silent, keeping their disapproving glares at him. He sighed and began to walk away. "Whatever. Enjoy trying to beat somebody better than you chumps."

Dustin sighed and turned back to the Dig Dug console. "Asshole."

Lucas sighed as well while the curly-haired boy inserted a coin to play the game. "He is, but...he's not wrong."

Dustin sighed again. "I know he's not wrong, but that isn't the point."

"It's just that...we've known for years now and it's getting more obvious."

The curly-haired boy started playing the game. "Listen, it doesn't matter right now. We'll talk about this some other time, alright?" He then put his focus on the screen, Lucas rolling his eyes at him. He was just stating a fact, jeez...

...

When Keith left, Jane was still looking for Will before finally seeing him outside. Why was he out there? She opened the door and placed a hand on his shoulder while saying, "Will." He gasped and looked at her worried face. "Are you alright?" He looked back up at the air, seeing that it was normal...unlike before.

He looked back at her and nodded. "Y-yeah, I just, uh, needed some fresh air, Jane," he answered, feeling his face heat up a little. "Don't worry."

She sighed in relief and released her hand off his shoulder. She then gestured him to come with her, backing up to the door. "Come on, I think we're going to play Dig Dug when Keith leaves us alone." He nodded as he followed her back inside. He knew he just had another episode, but he didn't want Jane to worry. He never wanted her to be worried about what was really going on with him at all. She might freak out or something. He just wanted her to be the way she was...

---

The next morning, Kali, wearing a white and purple sweater with black jeans and matching sneakers, was in Steve Harrington's car with her boyfriend himself, wearing a blue jacket, a red-collared shirt, regular jeans, and sneakers. She was looking through the essay he wrote. He sighed and said, "It's shit, I know."

She scoffed and shook her head. "It's not shit, Steve," she replied.

He shrugged. "I mean, it's not good."

"It's going to be if you push yourself enough." She then organized the essay in the proper order of pages. She looked at him and asked, "Can I mark on it?"

He nodded. "Go ahead."

She got a pen from the pocket of her jeans and clicked on the top to get the point out. She leaned towards him a little to show him the paper. She pointed at the first paragraph. "So, right here, in the first paragraph, you used the basketball game against Northern as a metaphor for your life, which is great." He nodded at her again, smiling a little. "But then, around here..." She circled a chunk of the paragraph. "You talk about your grandfather's experiences in the war." She looked at him again, looking a bit puzzled. "Can you tell me how that connects?"

"Well, it connects because..." he started, pausing for a few seconds. "We both won." He looked at her to get a comment on that. She nodded and looked away from him, looking at the paper again.

"So, you should find some other way to connect those two things."

He sighed, shrugging again. "I can start from scratch, if-"

She shook her head at him. "Oh no, no! I mean..." She sighed. "When's the deadline?"

"Tomorrow morning for early application." He then placed his hand on her arm. "Can you come over and help me tonight?"

She gave him a puzzled look again. "But our dinner's tonight."

He sighed again and looked away from her, feeling like an idiot. "Jesus Christ..."

"We cancelled last week, remember?" She took a deep breath, feeling bad for him. "I mean, you don't have to go and you can just work on this-"

He snatched the paper out of her hands and crumpled it up. "What's the damn point?"

She now looked concerned for him. "Hey, can you calm down?"

"I'm calm, I'm calm." She thought he didn't look that calm, more like stressed. He looked at her again. "I'm just being honest, Kal. I mean..." He shrugged once more. "I'm just going to go work for my dad anyway."

She shook her head at him, placing her hand on his shoulder. "No, no, that's not true, Steve."

He nervously grinned at him. "It's not so bad. There's the insurance and benefits and adult stuff like that. If I took it, I'd be around for your senior year."

She smiled at him a little. "Steve..."

"Y'know, just to look at you for a little bit, so that you won't forget about this pretty face." She began chuckling. "Kal, I'm serious." She turned to him, her hand now on one of his cheeks.

"I know." They then shared a short yet loving kiss, giving each other a loving look to each other's eyes.

"I love you, Kali."

"I love you too, Steve."

Suddenly, they both heard a car revving up. Curious, they both exited the car to see a more pristine one pull up and park somewhere. A girl with red hair and freckles came out, dressed like a tomboy, having a backpack on, and holding a skateboard. A guy also came out of it, having blonde hair in a messy mullet and wearing a jean jacket, a



plain white shirt, tight jeans, and boots. As the girl skated away, the guy closed the doors and flicked his cigarette away, walking to the school. Some of the girls were checking him out, especially his butt.

The couple looked confused. Who the hell was that? Was that a new guy coming to their school?

---

In the middle school, the four friends were in their science class with Mr. Clarke, who was talking about the human brain. Most of them were interested, but Will, like the rest of the class, wasn't. He was still thinking about what he got at his locker today: a defiled snippet of a news article about him that had "ZOMBIE BOY" on it. He was always picked on that way, being called "Zombie Boy" because he was alive even though he had a funeral.

Suddenly, the door opened and revealed the red-haired tomboy from earlier with the principal. Mr. Clarke saw her and smiled. "Ah, you must be our new student," he said.

"She is indeed," the principal said. "She's all yours." The principal then left and the girl was walking to her seat until the teacher stopped her by saying, "Ah, ah, ah, now wait a minute, young lady." She sighed and rolled her eyes. "You don't get away that easily." He kindly gestured her to stand in front of the class. "Come on, don't be shy." She grudgingly did so, looking around the class.

The teacher then looked at Dustin and said, "Dustin, drum roll, please." He closed his textbook and tapped on it like a drum. He smiled at the rest of the class as he announced, "Now, class. Please welcome, from the sunny California, the newest member on our curiosity voyage, Maxine!" He then pointed his hands at her, Dustin done with his drum roll.

She gave him a disapproving look. "It's Max," she replied to him, the curly-haired boy's eyes widening.

The teacher looked at her. "I'm sorry?"

"Nobody calls me Maxine. It's just Max."

Surprised, the Party looked at each other, Lucas mouthing out, "Mad Max..." They all thought that it WAS possible...

Mr. Clarke kept his smile though. "Well, welcome aboard, Max!" As she walked to her seat, the friends saw her go there. Jane then looked away when she sat down, but the boys kept looking, making her feel concerned. Why were they still staring at her...?

---

In Hideaway, Terry was dressed in her waitress uniform, serving a few guys a few mugs of beer. "Here you go, boys," she said to them before winking at them. "Enjoy." She then walked away from them and looked up at the clock. It was time for her break, so she went to the kitchen to announce, "If any of you guys need me, I'll be outside in the phone booth." They all affirmed that with her as she walked outside to talk to a certain someone.

...

With the phone to her ear, she greeted, "Hey, Joyce."

*"Hi, Terry. How's your day going?"* the brown-haired woman asked.

"It's going fine. And yours?"

*"Ah, you know, the usual."*

"And you and Bob?"

She heard Joyce giggling. *"Oh, we're just fine~..."*

She rolled her eyes and laughed a little. "Alright, spare me the details." She then placed a hand on her hip. "You surprised me though, dating him."

*"Oh, believe me, I surprised me too. He's just...perfect, y'know?"*

"He seemed like a nice kid back at high school and seems to be the same way now, so I'm not that worried about him. Nice change from that son of a bitch, Lonnie."

*"Definitely."* She paused before saying, *"You know, maybe you should*

*start dating too."*

She scoffed at the suggestion, shaking her head. "No...no thank you. I'm just fine on my own."

*"Come on, not every guy's...him, you know?"*

She nodded. "Yeah, I know, but I'm...just not interested right now. My daughters are my pride and joy, I don't need a man to provide that for me."

Now Joyce laughed. *"Yeah, you're right. You love those girls a lot, don'tcha?"*

"I'm their mother, of course I do. Don't you love your sons a lot?"

*"Uh, of course!"*

"See? It's just a mother thing."

*"Just a mother thing~!"* They both then laughed. *"Anyway, I should get back to work. Don't want Donald to think I'm slacking off."*

"Alright. Talk to you later, Joyce."

*"Bye, Terry!"* She then hung up, smiling. She was glad she and Joyce were being more like friends, calling and seeing each other often, talking about woman stuff. It was cheesy, she knew that, but it was something refreshing for her. She'll take anything refreshing at any day of the week.

Speaking of refreshing, she was now just working as a waitress. She quit her night shift, which released a lot of weight on her shoulders. It was because, in fact, ever since her meeting with Dr. Owens, she gets sent a check once a month. He knew her struggle, so it was the least he could do to make her life a bit better.

That is, if she kept everything that happened last year a secret, which she did, with no problem. She even kept one secret from others close to her AND the Labs...

---

Stopping here. How's the beginning chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?

Here's a link to how Nancy's hair looks like in this AU, just in case you guys wanted visuals (remove the spaces because the fact that this site doesn't allow you to put links as they are irks me): [www.laguiadelvaron.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/eb1d209654a11d127613f3c4b33738ce.jpg](http://www.laguiadelvaron.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/eb1d209654a11d127613f3c4b33738ce.jpg)

And here's Kali's hairstyle for this season (same as before): [iv1.lising.com/image/15349257/640full-linneaberthelsen.jpg](http://iv1.lising.com/image/15349257/640full-linneaberthelsen.jpg)

So...I haven't forgotten about Holly, I did plan for her to be in this season with Nancy. However...as you can see...she's not exactly Ted and Karen's kid in this AU...

Also, yeah, I have decided to add in Will's crush on Jane in this AU. Sorry to those of you that thought adding it in would be unnecessary, but I decided why not? Plus, this will make the story stray a little from canon. I hope I do well with it!

Well, at least Terry's doing better! Yay! But what exactly is her little secret...?

Review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

(P.S.: I'll stick with what I did before, updating every 2-3 days since it usually takes me that long to write a chapter of this fanfic.)

## 26. Eight-Fifteen

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Back in the high school, a girl from a class was handing out orange flyers. As Kali and Jonathan was exiting the class, the girl handed her a flyer, greeting her with, "Hi, Kali."

She smiled at her and greeted back, "Hey, Tina." She looked at the flyer and asked, "Can I get one more?" The girl nodded as she gave her another one. She gave that to Jonathan as they both walked down the hallway. "Here. You have to go."

He smirked at her and looked at the flyer, reading, "Come and get sheet-faced." He looked back at her, shaking his head. "No thanks."

She clicked her tongue at him. "Come on, Jonathan. You can't be all alone for Halloween."

"I won't be. I'll be trick-or-treating with Will."

She gave him a skeptical look. "All night?"

He nodded. "All night."

She laughed at him. "That won't happen. You'll be home by eight, listen to your radio, and read a book."

He shrugged, keeping his smile. "Sounds like a nice night."

She rolled her eyes at him. "You might meet someone, Jonathan. Someone you might like." She gave him a smile.

He scoffed at her in disbelief. "Yeah, no."

"Yeah, uh-huh." She then stopped at her locker to open it. "You might not know when you'll find your true love." Suddenly, she felt someone hoist her up and spin her a little, making her scream in surprise. She turned and saw no other than Steve, wearing sunglasses. She laughed and cried out, "You idiot! You scared me! And take those

damn things off!"

He was laughing with her, taking the sunglasses off. "I missed you, Kal," he said in a charming voice.

She began to smile. "It's only been an hour, idiot."

"Oh, tell me about it." He placed a hand on the back of her head and began kissing her.

Jonathan rolled his eyes again and said, "Ugh, get a room, you two." He then began to leave, making them break the kiss and look at him.

"Ah, c'mon, man!" Steve shouted to him. "If you had a girlfriend, you'd understand!"

"And that's why I'm not getting one!"

The jock shook his head and released his hold of his girlfriend. "Jeez, that guy." Kali giggled a little as she began getting her things from her locker.

---

Back on the middle school campus, the four friends saw Max skateboarding around. Jane was the only one that looked annoyed however. "That can't be Mad Max," Lucas stated.

"Yeah, the only girl that plays video games is Jane," Will added.

"And even so, she can't rank up 750,000 points on Dig Dug." The black-haired boy then looked at her. "No offense."

She only rolled her eyes and asked, "Why are we stalking her again?"

The boys gave her concerned looks. "We're not stalking her," Dustin retorted. "We wanna know if that girl's Mad Max."

She shrugged. "Maybe she is, maybe she isn't, I don't care."

Dustin and Lucas looked at each other, then looked at her. "Ya jealous?" the curly-haired boy asked.

She raised an eyebrow. "What?"

"Are you jealous that another girl beat your score on Dig Dug?" Lucas asked.

She scoffed and shook her head. "What? No."

Will felt concerned about her, so he said, "Jane, you can be honest with us-"

"I'm not jealous of Mad Max, okay?!" She huffed and turned away from them. "Jeez..." They all felt more concerned about her behavior, but she wasn't in the mood and the worst thing to do to a girl was piss her off more, so they just let her be.

They looked back to find Max, but didn't see her, freaking out a little. "Shit, where is she?!" Dustin exclaimed.

They continued looking around until the auburn-haired boy looked to his left and saw her, pointing at her. "Right there." The boys and even Jane turned to see her walking up the stairs, throwing a crumpled piece of paper into the trash can, and going inside the school. The boys looked at each other before running to the trash can. The tomboy looked at them all in disbelief and ran after them.

"Guys!" she shouted at them. They all stopped at the trash can, the boys looking down in it. Jane face-palmed as Dustin was the one digging through the trash and the two other boys blocked him from anyone's sight. A group of girls passed by, giving the four friends distasteful looks while Lucas and Will just waved at them, trying to look as innocent as possible.

"Got it!" Dustin shouted as his face and arms got out of the trash can. He had the crumpled piece of paper in his hands and the two other boys peeked over to read it. They all read out loud, "Stop spying on me, you creeps." Dustin frowned. "Well, shit." Jane actually giggled a little, making the three look at her again. "What's so funny?"

She shrugged, looking at them. "You guys deserve it."

They all kinda grinned at her before Lucas added, "She might add you too to that 'creeps' thing."

"Yeah, she might not know you're a girl." She just shrugged at them again, since that could be a possibility.

"William Byers," the principal said, the kids all turning to him. The man looked at the auburn-haired boy. "Your mother's here." His face turned solemn as well as everyone else's. They all knew what that meant...he had to go to a certain appointment.

He turned to his friends and waved at them. "Well, see ya later, guys," he said, the three waving back. He saw the worried look on Jane's face. God, he hated that look.

As he left with the principal, the three kids stood next to each other, walking to the side of the school. When they got there, they saw Will getting into the car with Joyce. "You think he's going to be alright?" Dustin asked his friends.

"He always acts weird when he has to go in," Lucas answered.

"I don't know, he's been more quiet than usual..." Jane replied. He didn't exactly talk that much when the three were talking to each other as usual and she did notice that he wasn't paying that much attention in class until Max came in. She hoped he will be alright.

---

Back home from Hideaway late in the afternoon, Terry changed into a turquoise shirt and loose-fit jeans. She went downstairs to the basement. As she reached to the floor, she spotted the handmade fort with the walkie-talkie in it. She approached it and sat on her knees in front of it. She took a good look at it. Shortly after Mike disappeared, Jane told her that she made this for him when she first brought him home. She kept this set up in case he came back.

That made her let out a heavy sigh, covering her mouth a little. She couldn't tell her. She wanted to, so badly, but she couldn't. She knew she couldn't. If she did, she would erupt a storm no one wants to be in, but will get stuck in. So she forced herself to keep her secret only to herself...and Hopper. Only she and him knew and no one else.

---

Later, she and Jane were alone at the dinner table, eating steak,



mashed potatoes, and vegetables and sitting next to each other. Kali was out on her dinner date with Steve, which was why it was just those two. Terry looked at her daughter, playing with her food and frowning. She felt heartbroken to see her like that, so she said, "Jane?" She only looked up at her. "What's the matter, sweetie?" The girl sighed and continued playing with her food. The woman sighed as well and set her silverware down. "Jane."

"What?" she replied in a cold tone.

She looked taken aback by that. "Don't answer me like that." The girl looked up at her again. "I'm just worried about you. You're playing with your food again, you have that face..." Jane knew what she was talking about, making her drop her fork. "Seriously, I need to know. You don't need to hide anything from me, sweetheart. We both went through what happened last year."

She was right. No bullshit could get through her again. She sighed again and looked at her straight in the eye. "I just miss him, Mama," she answered, looking sad. "I miss Mike."

The woman frowned at that. "I miss him too, Jane. I know how much you care about him." She then hugged her to her side. "And you know how much I care about him." She nodded. "He will come back someday, I know it." Although it was spoken in a context different from what Jane interpreted it is, she did hope it would happen, that one day, Mike will come and everything will be alright.

"I'm just tired of waiting..." She looked up at her. "I wanna find him."

The mother felt the wave of *deja-vu* hit her. It was just like one of their dinners last year, when her daughter said she wanted to find Will. "I know you want to, but you also know I can't let you. It's dangerous."

The curly-haired girl sighed, looking down at her food. "I understand, Mama."

"Sweetheart." The girl looked up at her again. "I know it's been a hard year for you. You stole from Kali, you cursed out one of your teachers, you plagiarized your essay, you graffitied the bathroom

stall-"

"Everyone does that, Mama."

She sighed. "The point is, I get it. It's been a rough year. But I need you to shapen up and stay positive. That way, I don't have to carry the load of the problems you've gotten yourself into this year and I don't have to take away your things as punishment. Is that fair?" Jane sighed. She thought that her mother never really understand how she felt. She got a few problems and they were bothering her more than ever. Sure, they went through that one night last year and they both missed Michael, but that was it.

Still, she had to say yes.

She nodded at her and replied, "Yes, Mama."

Terry used her free hand to pat her daughter's hair. "Sweetie, I'm not mad at you. I just want the best for you." She then kissed the top of her head. "Please eat. None of us want leftovers." The girl nodded as her mother released the hug. The two then continued eating, staying silent again.

---

Kali, wearing a gray coat over her sweater, was walking with Steve to the...Holland house. They both saw a "For Sale" sign on the front yard, worrying the both of them. They looked away and faced the door, stopping in front of it. Both of them didn't look that happy. "Okay, ready?" Steve asked her.

She nodded at him. "Ready," she answered.

"Alright." He then pressed the doorbell so that Mr. and Mrs. Holland could answer the door.

...

Inside, Kali and Steve got their coats off and sat with Mr. and Mrs. Holland, eating chicken from KFC. "I have to say I'm sorry that I didn't get to cook," Mrs. Holland stated. "I was going to cook that baked ziti you two loved so much, but I forgot about the time and before I even knew it, 'Oh my God, it's five o'clock. What now?'" She

and her husband laughed a little, the couple grinning.

"This is just fine, you two," Kali said to them reassuringly.

"Yeah, I just love KFC," Steve added. Mrs. Holland kept smiling at them, relieved that they said that.

After a few seconds of silence, the Indian girl stated, "When we got here, we saw a 'For Sale' sign on your front yard." She looked at them with concern. "What's that about?"

The parents exchanged glances, Mr. Holland gesturing his wife to tell her, so she looked at her and answered, "Recently, we just hired a man named Murray Bauman. Ever heard of him?" Both of them shook their heads.

"No, doesn't ring a bell," Kali replied.

"Yeah, I don't think I've heard the name 'til now," Steve added.

Mrs. Holland kept smiling. "He was an investigative journalist for the 'Chicago Sun-Times'."

"He's a pretty well-known guy," Mr. Holland added, handing the brown-haired guy a business card. Both him and his girlfriend looked to see a bearded man and his contact information.

"Now he's freelance and he agreed to take the case!" the woman finished in joy.

"Uh, that's great..." Steve said, looking at Kali for support. "That's great, right?"

She gave him a face that told him that she didn't know before looking at Barb's parents. "What does that mean exactly?"

"It means that he's gonna do what that lazy sonuva bitch Jim Ho-" the man said before his wife placed her hand on his arm to calm him down. He took a deep breath and said, "Sorry, I meant, what the Hawkins Police won't do." He then smiled. "We got a real detective on the case."

"And it means..." Mrs. Holland was near tears. "We're going to find Barb, our Barb."

"If anybody could find him, it's this man." Kali looked down at her chicken and sighed. Steve looked at her worriedly. "He has leads already, so he's proving to be worth every penny."

She looked up at them, looking worried. "And that's why you're selling the house?"

Mrs. Holland tried to give her a reassuring look. "Oh, sweetie, don't worry about us. We'll be fine. More than fine." Both parents smiled at her. "For the first time in a long time, we became so hopeful."

Kali nodded and gave her a half-assed smile. She then set her chicken on her plate and stated, "Excuse me. I need to use the bathroom."

"Oh, go ahead." She then left the table and went into the bathroom. She leaned against the sink and looked down on it, breathing heavily. The guilt she felt for not telling them the truth hung around her like a chain. Even if she did tell them, they wouldn't believe her. The talk about finding Barb, it was getting to her...because she knew.

She knew they weren't going to find Barb...find her alive...find her at all.

She wasn't going to be found, not even by this Murray guy.

She could feel her eyes getting watery, making her look up at her reflection on the mirror. It was getting blurry. She wiped her eyes to clear her vision. She then saw a picture of Barb to her right. It was a picture of when she was in middle school. She sighed and set the picture down. Even though that thing, the monster that killed her, was dead...

She still felt the same as she did before.

She sat on the end of the shower, covering her face as she began to cry. She missed her, she missed her so much...

---

Back at home in the basement, Jane laid down on the couch. Her

mother already left for her "night shift", so she was home alone. She looked at the table. Dungeons and Dragons used to be there, but she, like the rest of the boys, moved on from it, so it was kept in storage with the rest of the stuff her mom took from her. She then looked at another table. It used to have toys on it, toys that belonged to her, but there was nothing. That was because her mother took them from her and will never give them back until she behaved better. She sighed and sat up.

She finally looked at the handmade fort. It was still there, still empty, still set up for Michael when he returns. God, no words could describe how much she missed him. She got up from the couch and walked over to it. She sat under it and grabbed the walkie-talkie, pulling up its antennae. She pressed a button and asked, "Mike, are you there?" She listened for an answer, but got static. "Can you hear me, Mike?" She listened for an answer again, still getting static. She sighed and continued, "It's me, Jane. It's day 352, 7:40 p.m. I'm still here. I'm not going to abandon you." She listened, only hearing static. "Mike, please, just tell me you're okay...give me a sign. I won't even talk, I just...I just need to know that you're there." She heard nothing more than static. She felt like crying. "Mike?" Nothing.

She sighed heavily and shortened the antennae, shaking her head. She then stood up and walked away, feeling like she was an idiot for doing this for so long. But then suddenly, she heard a distorted voice saying, "*Jane?*" She gasped. It sounded like his voice, so she ran to the walkie-talkie, pulled up the antennae, and asked, "A-are you there?!"

*"Yeah, I'm here,"* Dustin answered. All the hope she got dropped when she heard his voice, making her sigh again. *"Seriously, what're ya doing on this channel again?"*

She looked upset and answered, "None of your business."

*"Jeez, I'm just asking."* He paused, now sounding happy. *"So, guess what? Max IS Mad Max!"*

Max, Max, Max...she's all the boys were talking about today. "Great," she replied coldly before shortening the antennae again.

*"Jane, what's-"* His voice got cut off when it was finally shortened and

turned off. As if she wasn't upset enough today...

---

Both Lucas and Dustin were riding their bikes in the dark, having their headlights on. "Sheesh," the curly-haired boy said. "She's getting more grumpier."

"She's probably just really jealous of Max," Lucas replied.

"Yeah, probably."

---

Terry was driving a secret path to the destination she was going to. On the passenger's seat was a bag with two containers of the dinner she and Jane had. As she drove, she couldn't stop thinking about her daughter. She was really worried about her. Her missing Mike had taken a toll on how she used to be. She hoped she could get better, but she was a young teenager. Though Terry was a young teenager way back in the day, she knew she never acted like that. She knew that Becky, however, exhibited the kind of behavior Jane had recently. Taking away her things as punishment wasn't exactly helping either. She sighed heavily. She had to come up with a way to make her feel better.

She finally saw a cabin not too far from her, so she parked in one space and stopped her car's engine. She grabbed the bag and got out of the car. She took a good look at the cabin. It was old and made of wood, the windows shedding a little light though they were covered by curtains. At least the inside was comfy enough. She walked up to the door, opened the screen part of it, and used a special knock. As she waited for the door to open, she could hear some TV playing there. She knew it was a cartoon, making her smile. He always loved watching cartoons.

Finally, the door was unlocked and opened. She pushed it open and went in before closing it behind her. She set her bag on the floor to take off her coat and hang it on the coat rack. She grabbed her bag again and looked at the person watching the TV. "Hey there," she greeted, waving at them and holding up the bag. "I got dinner."

---

In his home, Will was drawing with his crayons. He drew something on top of his other drawings. It was a portrait...of Jane. Not that he did this often, but whenever he drew her, he just felt at ease. He loved the way he drew her and her features. It was his only way to deal with his...feelings towards her. His feelings he had for her ever since they first met...

Suddenly, he heard a knocking on his door, startling him and making him try to hide his drawing. The door opened and revealed Jonathan with three movies in his hand. "Hey, bud," he greeted him, waving the movies. "I didn't know which one you'd like, so I got these." He set them in front of him. "Take your pick."

He just shrugged and replied, "Whatever you want, I don't care."

Jonathan looked a little concerned for him and sat next to him. "Okay..." He then looked over and saw one of his drawings, which was a zombie labelled as 'Zombie Boy'. "Zombie Boy? Who's that?" Will sighed. He didn't want him to see the drawing of Jane, but he didn't want him to see that either...well, it was too late.

"Me," he answered. He knew there was going to be a long conversation about that...

---

Another car was riding through the secret path Terry took to the cabin. It turned out to be Hopper's car. He parked it next to Terry's and got out, approaching the cabin. When he got in front of the door, he opened the screen part and used the same special knock Terry used. In a few seconds, it was unlocked and opened. He pushed it further and got inside. He closed the door behind him and placed his hat and his coat on the coat rack. He could smell some nicely-cooked food in the air, so he looked at the direction it came from. There was some nicely-cooked meat and vegetables at the dinner table, one for him and one for the kid.

He saw Terry at the part that was the kitchen, removing her apron. She looked at him and smiled. "Good evening, Jim," she greeted him.

He removed his belt and placed it on the kitchen counter. "Evening, Terry," he greeted back, nodding at her as he pointed at the food.

"Smells delicious."

She giggled and smiled, walking towards him. "Thanks. I try." She then walked to the TV and shut it off. At the same time, he got a can of beer from the fridge and suddenly spotted a half-open tub of mint ice-cream. He looked curious.

"Hey, Terry?" he called out to her.

"Yeah?" She walked towards him and saw the half-opened tub of ice cream, her eyes widening. "Oh my God, I never noticed that." They both sighed, Hopper grabbing the tub, and began walking to the table.

"Hey buddy, what did we talk about?" Hopper asked in a loud voice across the room as he seated himself.

"No signal," a young boy's voice answered from a room.

He looked confused. "What?"

"There was no signal. It's eight-one-five, you're late."

"Yeah, I'm sorry, lost track of time," the police chief added. "I'll signal next time, alright? And it's eight-fifteen, not eight-one-five." The boy got out of his room and sat across from Hopper.

It was Michael.

He was taller and had full, curly, combed black hair. He wore a navy blue polo shirt with red and tan stripes, tan-colored pants, and white sneakers. "Eight-fifteen."

"Now, what did Terry and I tell ya?" the man asked him, putting the half-open tub on the table.

He sighed and looked at the two. "Dinner first...then dessert."

Both of them nodded. "That's right, Michael," the woman replied. "That's a rule you have to follow, alright?"

He nodded at her. "Alright."



She smiled at him and said to the two males, "Today's dish is steak, mashed potatoes, and veggies. Dig in." The two then began to eat. Mike said that the dish was good, Hopper practically repeating the same thing. Terry thanked the both of them and began talking to them about their day. Throughout the dinner, they just talked and talked, enjoying themselves.

This seemed like a simple, yet enjoyable night.

---

**Done! What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

Yeah, like Mike in canon, Jane's getting pretty annoyed at the boys' interest of Max. It MIGHT be for a different reason though, 'cause last I checked, Mike's reason was that Max could replace El. It's not exactly the case here...

Poor Jane though...she misses Mike so much...

Speaking of Mike...boom! He makes an appearance in this chapter! Finally! He still looks the same as he did canonically in Season 2 with his hair and even his clothes (though his hair wasn't always like that...). He'll also still be a little emo like his canon counterpart did in Season 2, though it's for a different reason.

I hope I wrote the lone scene with Will drawing Jane. I figured he would do that if he had a crush on someone, drawing them, so yeah. Of course, he would keep them secret.

I also hope I wrote that dinner scene between Jane and Terry well. I maybe thought that Terry would still punish her for misbehaving the way she did, but due to what happened the year before, decided to take the mild route of punishment, which is taking away precious things and not giving them back until she was better behaved.

Anyways, review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

## 27. Halfway Happy

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

*"Goodbye, Jane."*

*The sight of her crying more and sobbing at that broke Mike's heart. He had no other choice.*

*He had to die with it.*

*He turned and began killing the Demogorgon with his power. It screamed at the pain, he screamed as he used his powers the best he could to kill it. Then...he remembered flakes, dark flakes, coming from it..*

*And then he was met with darkness for what felt like a long time. He thought he was dead...*

*Until he actually shot his eyes open and gasped a large amount of air.*

*He wasn't dead after all...he thought killing it would...*

*His nose was bleeding and he coughed out some bile, wiping some off of his lips with his sleeve. He then slowly stood up and looked at where he was...*

*He was at the school, in the same classroom...but it looked so different. There were white flakes in the air, plant-like vines being everywhere he looked. Everything was lit blue...*

*Where was he? What was happening?*

*...*

*Once he exited the classroom, he felt so bogged down, so tired, but he kept going. He needed to escape from this place, no matter what...and he needed to find Jane and the others.*

*Especially Jane.*

*He felt a bit of nausea, so he stopped and leaned against the wall for a bit until it resided. As he breathed heavily, he looked around, becoming worried. "J-Jane..." he called out, his voice echoing throughout the hallways. There was nothing but silence, his worry skyrocketing. Once the nausea was gone, he walked straight down in the main hallway, where most of the lockers were. It was so eerily quiet...and there was no one else around. This made him feel so unpleasant, so...scared.*

*"Jane?" he asked, getting no answer and making him feel more worried and scared. He didn't have the energy to run, but he had the energy to speed-walk. "Jane?! JANE?!"*

*No answer.*

*His eyesight began to blur since they were filling with tears. He wiped his eyes with his sleeve. What happened to her?! What happened to everyone else?! What was going on?! He wanted to know!*

*"JANE!" He turned to another hallway, leading to a wall as he looked at both directions. There was still no answer and still no sign of Jane or anybody...that led him to thinking if they were...*

*No, no, they couldn't be. She couldn't be...they-*

*A distant voice made him break away from his thoughts, making him look at the direction it came from. He saw a hole...a small, glowing red hole. Slowly and carefully, he began to approach it, just in case anything...scary happens.*

*He finally got in front of it, looking straight at it. It wasn't bright enough to hurt his eyes, thankfully. Was this where the voice came from?*

*He heard more voices as through the hole, he saw two people with flashlights roaming around on the other side of it. His eyes widened before one of them got close and examined the hole with the flashlight. He instantly got out of sight and stood right next to it, hoping he wasn't caught. It could be the bad men looking for him...or maybe good people? Whatever the case, his heart was racing anxiously.*

*"Bravo Team, come in!" said someone on a radio from the other side. Mike closed his eyes and kept hoping that they would go away. They were*

*nothing more than a bunch of strangers, after all. He had to keep himself safe, just in case.*

*He heard the voices on the other side fading after a moment, making him open his eyes. He looked through the hole and saw nobody else. It must be safe then, right? He then slowly reached his hand towards the hole, wondering if he could break through it. When his fingertips felt the texture covering the hole, it felt more smooth and slimy. It felt weird, but he kept going. Finally, his hand managed to break through the texture. He pulled it back to see it was gooey. He just touched goo. Mildly disgusted, he wiped his goo-covered hand on his pants.*

*However, he discovered that this hole could be his only way out of here. He could go find Jane, and Terry, and Lucas, and Dustin. He had to get through there.*

*Since it was too small, he stepped back and tilted his head down, bringing his hand up and using his power to make the hole even bigger than it was so he could fit through it. When it was big enough, he stopped, feeling a little more tired, but not caring. He got close to it again and used both of his hands to break away the goo. When it did, he got covered in it and finally got through, landing on his knees and taking in the fresh air.*

*He looked around, seeing that this was the same hall he escaped out of, but with blood tracks on the floor. Did this mean that everything was alright? He stood up and looked back at the hole, which repaired its goo. His eyes widened again. That meant he was in...*

*The Upside Down.*

*He could have been trapped there forever, but he was thankful that wasn't the case. He got to live...and now he'll find the girl he cared about so much, Jane. He walked to the left, to the exit doors straight ahead.*

---

*Once he was out of the school and off of the campus, he walked through the woods before finding the power lines. He knew those power lines meant Jane and Terry's home wasn't that far, so he walked towards them. As he got closer, he spotted red and blue lights flashing, puzzling him. When the house was in sight...he saw police cars lined up in the driveway. He felt very tense, since he thought this could be a bad sign. He walked*

towards the house, but tried to be out of sight as much as possible if he saw anybody outside.

---

Meanwhile, inside the house, the entire Ives family was there, including Becky and Carl, as well as some detectives and police. "What about the Russians?" the short-haired woman asked two detectives. "What if they find him?"

"He seems really dangerous," her husband added.

"They don't know where he is," one detective answered them.

"And he wouldn't contact you or Teresa without us knowing," another detective added.

In the kitchen, another detective was talking to Terry, asking her quietly, "Did you get the card?" The woman nodded, taking it from her pocket and showing it to him, including the message on the back, before putting it back.

"This Dr. Samuel Owens...who is he, exactly?" she asked him.

"He's one of the leading doctors from another facility in Chicago." The reminder that there were more facilities similar to Hawkins Lab sickened her. "All that I can tell you right now, he will help you get your life back together if you keep all of this-

"Top secret?" He nodded. "I can do that." She hoped it would be a good decision to make contact with him though...

In another room in the house, a couple more detectives were questioning Jane, the female one asking, "Let's go back to the beginning, sweetie-

"I told you everything," the girl responded, interrupting her.

The male detective sighed and said, "I can understand how difficult this is for you, Jane-

She looked up at him in disbelief. "I swear, I don't know where he is!"

"That's how your mother responded before Detective Haymore took her

away."

*"And she's right." She grasped the arms of the cushioned chair hard. "Even if I did know where he is, I'd die before I tell you." She may be young, but she knew she wasn't stupid. These adults thought otherwise, though, much to her dismay.*

---

*Outside, Mike looked through the window, peeking through the crack of the curtains and seeing Jane...with two other adults. They had to be bad people since she looked upset talking to them.*

---

*"Listen, Jane," the female detective told her. "You must understand that the stories he told you are not true. He's a very dangerous boy." He wasn't, not to her, and she knew that better than this lying woman and her stupid comrade ever will.*

*"If he gets in contact with you, you have to tell us," the male detective also told her. "Or even if you find out that he contacts your mother, you must tell us immediately." She sighed before looking at her window...suddenly seeing someone look at her through it and locking eyes with...him.*

*"Otherwise, not only would you be putting yourself at risk, but also your entire family. Do you understand, Jane?" She didn't listen to the woman as she slowly figured out who was at the window, making her expression slowly shift from upset to shocked. Was that...?*

---

*Outside, the shaved-haired boy looked so melancholic. He saw Jane again and she was looking at him, but...those people...what were they telling her? It couldn't be anything good...*

---

*"Jane?" There was no answer from her. "Jane?" Still no answer. However, the male detective put two-and-two together, figuring out why she was looking at the window the way she was...*

---

*The police and detectives exited out of the Ives household, checking out every side of the home, every place that was close to it to find Michael.*

*There was even a helicopter looking for him.*

---

*Some of the detectives looked into the woods for him not finding him anywhere. The boy, however, was hiding underneath a fallen tree on the descending slope, the trunk keeping him out of sight. He curled himself up, looking both scared and downcast and hoping he wouldn't get caught. He would never go back there, no matter what. If he had to kill those that will, he would.*

*Still...as long as these people were around...he wouldn't see Jane. He wouldn't see her again until they were gone...*

*That meant...he was on his own.*

---

It was the dead of night. Mike had been tucked into bed while Hopper watched some TV with Terry...in low volume, of course. While a few commercials were playing, the man looked at the woman and asked quietly, "So, what do we do about tomorrow?"

She gave him a puzzled look. "What do you mean?"

"Tomorrow's Halloween." She felt like an idiot for not noticing that. "The kid knows about it because of some commercials he watched. He told me he wanted to go trick-or-treating."

She let out a sigh and crossed her arms. "He can't go out there, even if he's in costume."

He nodded. "That's what I've been thinking. The Lab got all eyes on the both of us..."

"And bringing him out will make them question us."

"And we'll have to bring him back there."

"I would die before doing that. I could never betray him like that."

"Right. Still..." He paused. "He's probably not going to like this."

She sighed again and stopped crossing her arms. "You were his age

before, maybe you can talk to him and tell him why he can't go out."

Now he sighed, looking at the TV screen. "I'll try, Terry." Even when he was Mike's age back in the 60's, the boy went through much more and much worse than him back then. Besides, he's never had a son before...at the same time, neither did Terry. They were both trying their best and they weren't going to stop now.

When she looked at the clock, she saw that it was now midnight, so she got up from the couch and whispered to the police chief, "I need to go."

He nodded, whispering back, "Gotcha." As she got her things, he began to think about...what happened in the past with them, some time after they found Mike. Before she could leave, he said, "Wait." She stopped and turned to him with a grin.

"What, you need me to shop for groceries?" she jokingly asked him.

He let out a quiet chuckle before looking serious. "No, I..." He released a heavy sigh and turned off the TV, walking towards her and gently grabbing her shoulders. "I've been thinking about..." He trailed up, drawing his lips to a fine line. "That time we..." She got the memo quickly, frowning.

"Jim..."

"I know I told you that you can think about it and I don't wanna rush you, but it's been months. Sooner or later, you need to make up your mind, okay?" She let out a deep sigh, looking away from him and unlocking the door.

"Good night, Jim." She then exited out of the cabin and walked to her car. She had nearly forgotten about that, wishing Jim never brought it up. She placed a hand on her chest, taking a deep breath. Even now, she didn't have a concrete answer...and she hated that.

He deeply sighed as she did before, going back to the couch to sleep. As he said before, he wanted her to think about this and didn't want to rush her. But he will admit, he was getting impatient. Still, whenever she's ready to answer and whatever the answer will be,



he'll be ready with it.

...

Now it was morning. He began cooking breakfast for him and Mike, who hadn't woken up yet. The breakfast was french toast. Usually, his french toast wouldn't be as good as it was when...Sara was alive. But thanks to Terry teaching him her handy cooking skills, he could actually make not only decent french toast, but also decent food. The kid wouldn't want to eat mediocre food anyway.

As he turned around, he suddenly saw the freckled boy himself in a ghost costume, which was just a white blanket with holes where the eyes were. That actually made him tense up and exclaim, "Jesus Christ!"

Under his costume, Mike grinned a little at his reaction and spread his arms out. "I'm a ghost," he said plainly.

The man sighed and looked back at the french toast he was cooking. "Yeah, I can see that, buddy." He then carried the pan of french toast to the counter that had plates.

"It's Halloween."

"Yep, it is." He slid the french toast to each of their plates, which also had two strips of bacon on them. "But now it's breakfast, so take that off and we'll eat." He put the pan back on the stove and carried both of the plates.

The freckled boy frowned at his response. "They wouldn't see me."

He set the plates at the dinner table and went back to get his cup of coffee and the boy's glass of orange juice. "Who wouldn't see you?"

"The bad men."

He set the drinks at the table and looked up at him in concern. "What are you talking about?"

"Trick-or-treat."

To be honest, Jim wished it wasn't Halloween. Time flies fast when you're getting old, he guessed. "Are you sure about that?" The boy simply nodded, making him sigh again. He and Terry had talked about this last night. They came to the conclusion to not make an exception, even for this day. He stood up and replied, "You know the rules."

"Yeah, but-"

He grabbed his shoulders and added, "You know the answer."

He shook his head. "They wouldn't see me."

"No."

Now Mike felt upset. "They wouldn't see me," he repeated coldly.

"Hey-"

"They wouldn't see me! Terry could-"

"Hey!" Now his grip on his shoulders was firm, making the boy silent and look at him straight in the eye. "Terry and I talked about this last night and we both agreed that you're not going out, even for today."

Now Mike looked dumbfounded at that statement. "She hasn't seen me in this yet."

"We both agreed, okay?" The boy frowned under his costume again. "We both agreed that, costume or not, you're not going out there. It's a risk, and we don't take risks." He paused to release his hands from his shoulders. "They're stupid, and..."

The boy sighed, feeling defeated as he replied in a bitingly frustrated voice, "We're not stupid."

Jim had noticed the tone in his voice being frustrated, but since he was his age way back when, he had to hammer it home. "Exactly." He pointed at his costume. "Take that off, sit down, and eat. Your food's gonna get cold." The man then proceeded to sit at his spot.

The boy let a huff and removed his ghost costume. He wore a gray

polo with blue and yellow stripes and dark jeans. He visibly looked upset as he sat down, trying to tone down his look although Jim could clearly see that he was frustrated. He got that, he was the kid's age back in the 60's. It happens.

As he poured maple syrup on both of their pieces of french toast, he thought of something. The boy didn't look at him, but he decided to say, "Okay, bud, look." He rested his forehead against his hand. "How about this: I visit Terry and convince her to buy some candy and I get off early, then we can all sit around, eat them 'til we're fat, and watch a scary movie, all three of us? How's that for a compromise?"

The boy looked puzzled at the word. "Com-promise?" he asked, separating "com" from "promise" as he spoke.

Jim leaned forward to him a little. "C-O-M-promise. Com-pro-mise." Mike looked away from him again, playing with his fork. "How about that be your word of the day? Compromise?" He still didn't look at him. "It means something kind of in-between, halfway-happy."

Halfway happy? It sounded better than not being happy. Besides, that plan didn't sound bad at all. It could be fun. He looked back at the man and asked, "By...seven-zero-zero?" It was usually the time Terry comes in, so...

He nodded. "Seven o'clock. Sure."

"Promise?"

He leaned forward at him again. "Yes. I promise, Mike."

A promise...something that can never be broken no matter what. He hoped he and Terry didn't. He also hoped it would be fun. He gave him a half-smile and said, "Halfway happy." He then began to cut his pieces of french toast.

Jim smiled, knowing the kid would come around. Since his own father was an asshole, he had to make a deal a boy like him wouldn't deny. He glad that worked. Besides, he knew Mike meant well. He reached over and ruffled his shaggy bed hair, making him grin and chuckle a little. The two then peacefully began to eat their breakfast,

hoping the rest of the day will be alright and the plan comes to life.

---

In the front yard of the Sinclair household, Mrs. Sinclair was taking pictures of Lucas in his Ghostbuster costume, posing rather confidently. His little sister, however, was not enjoying this. "God, you are SUCH a nerd," she told him.

He gave her a disapproving look and replied, "Shut up, Erica."

"I still don't know why a girl hangs out with you." Because she was his friend? It should be common knowledge to her.

"Ericaaa..." Mrs. Sinclair said sharply through her teeth demandingly.

The little girl looked up at her. "I'm just stating a fact!" The woman continued taking pictures of Lucas while Erica mouthed, "Nerd." He swore, she couldn't be any more annoying...

---

In the Ives home, Terry was taking pictures of Jane in her Ghostbuster costume, who was looking annoyed by the amount of pictures the woman took of her. "Please let that be the last one, Mama..." she pleaded, stopping her pose.

She took out the picture and replied, "Sorry, sweetheart! Just one more! You look so pretty in that!"

The girl looked baffled that she even said that. "I'm not even supposed to look-"

"Okay, strike a pose a Ghostbuster would do and say, 'Who you gonna call?'"

The girl groaned and struck a pose, unenthusiastically saying, "Who you gonna call...?"

---

Later, Jane, Dustin, and Lucas were riding together, singing the Ghostbusters theme enthusiastically and smiling. They parked their bikes and all sang, "Who you gonna call~?"

"Ghostbusters~!" Will sang, appearing before them. They all approached each other, being all excited. "Hey, Spengler!"

"Egon!" Jane happily exclaimed.

Will hugged Lucas as he said, "Venkman!"

That removed the happiness the tomboy once had. "Whoa, whoa, wait."

The happiness in the air broke when she said that, Lucas turning to her and asking, "What?"

"Why are YOU Venkman?"

He shrugged. "Because I'm Venkman."

She shook her head and pointed at herself. "No, I'M Venkman."

Will looked concerned, asking, "Why can't there be two Venkmans?"

She looked at him with a baffled look. "There's only ONE Venkman! We planned this months ago! I'm Venkman..." She pointed at Dustin. "Dustin's Stantz..." She then pointed at Will. "You're Egon..." She finally pointed at Lucas. "And he's Winston."

The black-haired boy looked annoyed. "Uh, last I checked, I didn't AGREE to be Winston!"

"Yes, you did!"

Will knew Lucas was right, so he said, "I don't think he did, but-"

"No one wants to be Winston, Jane."

She looked perplexed. "Why? What's wrong with him?"

"He joined the team super late, he's not funny, and he's not even a scientist!"

Jane huffed and rolled her eyes. "Listen, Venkman doesn't look like you."

"He doesn't look like you either!"

"So what?!"

"So what?! Do you hear yourself? You sound like a hypocrite!"

She was about to storm to him, but Will managed to stop her by getting in front of Lucas. "Jane, Jane!" he cried out, making her look at him. "Really, it's not a big deal."

She looked baffled at him. "It's not a big deal?"

"We're supposed to have fun, remember? It's Halloween. Who cares if there's two Venkmans? We're all still Ghostbusters." He was right...

She sighed and stepped back to where she was, saying to Lucas, "Sorry."

He shrugged, replying, "It's alright. At least we're both a funny character." They both laughed, even Will.

However, Dustin was looking at the kids departing from the last bus, saying, "Guys..." They all looked at him before looking at the kids departing from the bus...wearing normal clothes. "Why is no one else wearing costumes?" That was an excellent question...and they all knew the answer.

---

As the Party roamed inside the school in their costumes, their peers looked at them and had their share of laughs and giggles. Even one girl said, "Oh my God, even the girl..." All of them felt deeply embarrassed that they were the only ones in costume.

"Why do people make these decisions...?" Dustin muttered to his friends.

"Everyone dressed up last year..." Will added.

"It's a conspiracy, I'm telling you."

"I seriously don't get it..." Jane muttered under her breath. "But try to act normal, you guys."

"Who you gonna call~?" sang a boy they walked past. "The nerds~!" A few other kids laughed at that. All of them tried their absolute best not to react to that.

"Hey, last I checked, there wasn't a GIRL Ghostbuster!" another kid shouted to Jane specifically. "The only girl got possessed in the movie!" Other kids laughed with him. She tried not to give him any attention, though she felt like punching him in the face.

Will felt bad for her, staying close to her and whispering, "Are you okay?"

She nodded. "I'll be fine. They're just idiots." He kind of smiled at that.

They all went to their own lockers to get their stuff for homeroom, separating for a bit. Suddenly, they all noticed Max skating through the hallway to her locker. Lucas and Dustin kept their eyes on her, so when Jane saw them look at her with googly-eyes, she sighed and rolled her eyes. She swore, Max made the boys into idiots...

"Jane?" asked Will.

She looked at him, making her irritated expression go away by the sight of him. At least he wasn't looking at her with googly-eyes. "Yeah?"

"What's wrong?"

She shook her head. "Nothing."

He looked worried. "Are you sure?"

"Yes, Will. Don't worry." She then slammed her locker shut and began walking to class. "Come on." As much as he...liked her, he did spot her looking at Lucas and Dustin looking at Max, so he wasn't stupid. Maybe the fact that a girl like Max suddenly appears was bothering her. Sure, having another tomboy that kicked butt at video games was cool...

But she would never be as cool as Jane, he would know.

---

Done with this chapter! What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed? Sorry for updating a day late! I just went to a college application workshop yesterday and it went on for 8 hours, so...yeah.

Anyways, I hope I wrote the flashback well, especially with what happens in the house. I also hope you guys don't mind the slight change in Jane and Lucas's argument about being Venkman.

Wonder what Jim and Terry were talking about...maybe I was too on-the-nose about it...

Review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!



## 28. People Are Gonna Be Aghast!

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

After his visit to Joyce due to her calling him, Jim drove to Hideaway, trying to look casual without his sheriff hat. He would call Terry, but he knew that the Lab would listen in, so a visit was safer.

He took a deep breath and entered in, seeing a couple waitresses, but not Terry. "Oh, Chief Hopper," one of them at the bar greeted, distancing herself from her customers to try and not make a scene. "It's been a while."

He smiled and nodded, smoking his cigarette. "It has, Diane," he replied. He has been in Hideaway before, but no one knew him on a name basis. Ever since he gotten himself a friendship with Terry, nearly every waitress calls him by his title, which he decides to let slide. He had taken visits to Hideaway a few times, but just a few times. His last visit was two months ago and Terry was always off the clock whenever he visited.

"You looking for Terry?" He simply nodded. "She just went into the kitchen."

"Alright."

He was about to move, but then Diane said, "Wait. You're not allowed to go in there."

He looked at her plainly. "Not even as Chief of Police?"

She shook her head. "Not unless you get my bosses' permission."

"Permission to do what?" asked Terry. The two of them looked at her, seeing that she was surprised to see him there.

While he just smiled at her, Diane stated, "He, uh, wants to see you."

"Actually, I want to talk to her for a bit," he added before looking at her. "Is that fine?"

What the hell did he want to talk to her about? "Make it quick." As they walked out of the restaurant, she spotted Diane winking at her, making her roll her eyes. She and the rest of the girls knew they weren't like THAT at all. It didn't help that she wasn't concrete on his question earlier either.

"So, listen." He ashed his cigarette on the ashtray provided at the table. "The kid wants to go trick-or-treating and I told him what we talked about."

Right... "Is he upset?"

"Yeah, but I compromised with him."

She looked a bit concerned. "Compromised?"

"I told that I would come talk to you into buying some candy for us before we all come back home."

She raised an eyebrow. "Why?"

"I told him that I'll get off work early and we'll come at seven and watch a scary movie while eating them. I think he's looking forward to it."

It didn't sound like a bad compromise. After all, Terry wouldn't be around to greet the trick-or-treaters...like before. It honestly reminded her of some times in the 60's when she and Becky would do the same thing on Halloween with their bags of candy. Perhaps it'll be fun for all of them. "I'll buy the candy for us."

He smiled at her. "I appreciate it, Terry."

She smiled back at her, feeling a bit warm-hearted by his statement. He then smoked his cigarette again, blowing the smoke away from her. That made her ask, "What's with that?"

He looked at her. "With what?"

She pointed at the cigarette. "You smoke, Joyce smokes, Becky smokes..." A couple of her co-workers even smoked too and her parents did too before they died. She swore, she grew up around

smokers.

He chuckled at that statement. "What, do you wanna?" He offered her the cigarette, but she held her hand up and shook her head.

"No, no thanks."

"Ya sure?"

As much as she wanted to say yes, the curiosity of trying it was eating her away. She knew it was bad for health, but she knew that one smoke wouldn't kill a person instantly. She sighed and offered her hand. Jim handed it to her and said, "You just suck it in and breathe it out." She did as she was told, but then instantly took it out of her mouth and began coughing out smoke.

"Oh my God..." she muttered, making him grin. It was like she was suffocating. "How do you guys tolerate this crap?" She coughed out more smoke. "I feel like I nearly choked myself to death..."

Her reaction was as expected. "Ah, you get used to it after a few times." She handed the cigarette back to him and tried to regain her breathing, shaking her head. "You alright?"

"I'll live." After she coughed again, she made herself go through a deep breath. "Isn't this what you and Joyce did back in high school?"

He looked surprised by what she said. "She told you?"

"Back then. She told me you would share cigarettes with her between periods before getting caught by Mr. Cooper or someone else." She chuckled a little, remembering her high school days way back when and crossing her arms. "I always thought you were trouble, not only making Joyce do that, but also being the talk of the girls back then."

He grinned again. "'Course you did. You were the teacher's pet, a goody-two-shoes." As much as she hated to admit it now...he was right. "You crushed on me?"

She scoffed. "I was WAY into my studies to have a crush."

"'Course you were."

She giggled a little before straying from the subject by stating, "Anyway, I'll get the candy for you and Mike. I'll see you at seven?"

He nodded. "Yeah. It'll be like a family get-together." They both exchanged smiles before leaving each other.

The police chief noticed that he shared cigarettes with two women today, two women he was close to, two women he attended high school with...two women that were single at the moment. God, it was like he was a damn teenager again.

As Terry went inside, not only did Diane grin, but also Cathy, much to her dismay and assumption that they saw what happened. "It's not the way you guys think it is, okay?" she told them.

"Are you sure about that?" Cathy asked her.

"I mean, he shared a cigarette with you," Diane added. "That's like an indirect kiss."

She looked at her, nodding. "Yeah."

The older woman rolled her eyes and scoffed. "You guys are so obsessed with romance..."

"It's natural to us women, Terry. Aren't you interested in romance?"

Honestly...she didn't know. Sure, she wasn't exactly a fan of romance movies nor does she want to read romance novels, but...she was unsure, for lack of a better word.

---

In the high school's library, Kali and Steve were doing their math homework. She wore a multi-colored collared shirt, a lavender sweater, skinny jeans, and flats. She erased a number on her paper and rewrote a different one. As she did though, the lead of her pencil broke off, much to her annoyance. "Shit..." she muttered almost inaudibly before standing up and going to the pencil sharpener. Steve watched her go, keeping an eye on her.

She approached it and began sharpening her pencil. She decided to look around while doing so, suddenly seeing a spot of red hair.

Catching her eye, she saw a girl with red hair...like Barb's...wearing what she would wear if she was still alive. She felt very uneasy, but kept looking at her, not caring about sharpening her pencil for too long. Damn it, she remembered hearing her voice like it was yesterday...

---

*"Kal...this isn't you."*

*"What are you talking about?"*

*"I can't believe it. You're NEVER this stupid!"*

*"You know what? If you're not enjoying this, then go home. I don't need your negative attitude, anyway!"*

---

She knew she was a bitch back then, but...she couldn't forgive herself for it still. Their last conversation was a stupid argument...

"Kali...?" she could hear her call out. "Kali?!" She probably did that while she-

"Kali, Kali," Steve said to her, holding her shoulder and making her look up at him. He looked a bit worried for her. "What's wrong? Are you okay?"

She wished.

She looked at the doppelganger, seeing that it was indeed another girl and not Barbara as she walked away with a book in her hands. She sighed deeply, looking down and frowning.

...

Inside a room inside the library now, she told her boyfriend, "I can't keep doing this, Steve."

"Doing what?" he replied.

"Pretending that everything's okay, that everything's just peachy."

"What are you talking about?"

She raised her eyebrows and whispered, "Barbara." She looked melancholic, making him look the same as well. "It's like no one gives a shit except her parents, who are selling their house and..."

"Kal-"

"And now they're gonna spend the rest of their lives looking for her..."

"I know, I know-"

"And it's gonna destroy them!"

The jock deeply sighed. "I know, Kal, I know. I get it. But...there's nothing we can do about it."

She gave him an appalled look. "Is telling them the truth out of the question?" Since she and some Lab officials did fill him in after that encounter with the Demogorgon last year...

He shook his head. "You and I both know we can't do that."

"But we don't need to tell them EVERYTHING."

"This isn't a game, Kali. If they found out we told any..." He trailed off, knowing that they would look suspicious to a bystander. He went to wind the blinds shut to look less suspicious before being in front of her again. He looked more worried now. "If they found out we told anybody, we could be in jail or worse...they could destroy our families. They could do anything they want, okay? Think about what you're saying." Damn it, as much as she didn't want to admit it...he's got a point. It didn't make her feel any better though. Damn the government. She just felt like shit...

He saw that she looked more sad than before, making him feel like shit too. "Hey..." He leaned against the table and caressed her arm gently, managing to make her look at him. "Hey...it's hard, but let's..." He let out a deep sigh, shaking his head before continuing, "Let's just go to Tina's stupid party, wear our stupid costumes we spent a stupid amount of time working on, and pretend like we're stupid teenagers for one night, okay?" He continued to caress her arm before caressing

her cheek. "Just tonight."

She thought it was a stupid idea, but he knew it was stupid and...well, getting stupid for just one night would make her feel less shitty, so she nodded. "Alright, Steve."

He needed to comfort her, so he whispered to her, "Come here." They both then hugged each other, Kali sighing. She hated this, but...she was glad that Steve was there for her and trying to make her feel better. He was an idiot...but he was her idiot, her kind and loving idiot.

---

Back in the cabin, Mike was watching TV, his hair combed and seeing an advertisement for soap for women. He tilted his head, turning the knob to change the channel. There was another commercial, this time for the Terminator. "*Inhuman...*" the narrator said. "*Relentless...*" He saw the Terminator crash through a wall, break open a door, and cause an explosion.

It had captured Mike's attention, him murmuring, "Inhuman...relentless..." He always says words or phrases to himself to make himself learn new words to say. Of course, Hopper and Terry would give him a "word of the day" for him to learn. However, he would do this and ask Terry what they meant when she comes at seven zero-zero-no, seven o'clock. He had no idea what those meant, but they had to be bad, right?

*"Arnold Schwarznegger is...the Terminator."*

"The Terminator." He wondered what that title meant.

As the channel played another commercial, he switched the channel to another, playing a soap opera. He heard the woman in it say, "*Well, I'm stunned! I don't know what to think!*"

"*Don't you love me?*" a man in the show asked her.

*"Of course I love you!"*

"Love..." the freckled boy said. What was it?

*"It's just that...it's so sudden. I mean, it's not like you."*

*"Erica...I am this way because of you."*

*"I am this way because of you."*

*"Me?"*

*"Mmm-hmm." The man began to talk into her ear, making the boy look a little concerned. "You make me wild and impetuous, just like you."*

*"Impetuous..."*

*"People are gonna be aghast!"*

*"People are gonna be aghast."*

*"They're gonna love it!" The two in the TV then laughed before Mike heard some squealing. He looked behind him, wondering what made that noise.*

He stood up and walked towards the window, opening up one of the blinds. He knew he shouldn't do that, but it was just for a second. He then saw a squirrel on a bird feeder, seeing it look at him. Seeing it suddenly triggered a memory pertaining to last year...

---

*Snow was on the ground and it was cold. A squirrel ran up on a stump, minding its own business. Suddenly, it was thrown against a tree and killed...by Mike's power. Some of its blood stained the snow as the telekinetic boy approached it. His entire outfit was dirtier than before and he had grown short, curly hair. His nose bled a little as he held it up and sighed. Killing the animals was the only way to get food in these woods...he had to do it.*

...

*He had set up a fire, having the dead squirrel on a stick and hovering it over the fire. He tried his best not to burn it up like the first time he did this.*



*He suddenly heard a twig snap, making him look back to see an elderly man with a gun and dressed in hunting attire. "Hey," he called out to him. He didn't want to be spotted by anybody... "I'm not gonna hurt ya." Even though he had a gun? Though his clothes looked warm...*

*The man slowly approached him, asking, "What's your name?" He didn't answer. "What're ya doing out here in the cold?" Even though he wasn't looking at it, Mike held up one of the flaming sticks from his fire, surprising the man before throwing it towards him and knocking him out. He ran to him and took off his jacket and hat, putting those on to keep himself warm.*

*He then ran away as far as he could from him. He will never left his guard down like that ever again. If he was a bad man...it would've been worse.*

---

He remembered not eating the squirrel that day, but killing and eating another one. Still...he felt so guilty for killing animals so he wouldn't be hungry.

He only gulped and closed the blind to resume watching television.

---

After school, Jane, Lucas, and Dustin rode their bikes to Jane's home to hang out before trick-or-treating. "Really though, everyone dressed up last year," Dustin stated.

"Why didn't they this year?" Jane asked.

Lucas shrugged. "I dunno," he answered. "I mean, we didn't get sent to the principal's office for wearing these, so..."

A hum of a car rang off in a distance, Dustin looking back to see a blue sports car driving fast towards them. "Uh, guys...?" The two other kids looked back to see the car driving at them quickly, making them all panic and ride their bikes faster.

"Go, go, go, go!" the tomboy exclaimed. None of them wanted to die today, so they all swerved to the side as the car swerved to the right...to avoid them.

Dustin fell off his bike and yelled, "Shit!" Jane and Lucas got him up on his feet, the kids panting and having their hearts pumping fast because of what happened. "H-holy shit! Was that..." He pointed at the car speeding off in the distance.

"Mad Max..." Lucas breathed out. Jane looked at the two with irritation.

"What, Mad Max tried to run over us?" she sarcastically asked.

They both looked at her and shook their heads. "No, I think..." He and the curly-haired boy both looked at each other and exchanged glances before looking back at her. "When we were looking after her-"

"You mean stalking her."

Both looked at her disapprovingly before the black-haired boy continued, "We saw her riding with someone else, probably her brother."

"Of course he gets to drive 'cause, y'know, he looks like a teenager," the curly-haired boy added, shrugging.

Jane let out a heavy sigh and said, "He's an asshole."

They both nodded at her, seeing the car disappeared at the distance. "Yeah," Dustin replied.

"Definitely," Lucas added.

---

Entering into the grocery store later that day, Terry wore a long-sleeved white shirt, loose fit jeans, and black high heels. She spotted Joyce at the cash register, the two looking happy to see each other and waving. "Hey, Terry!" the brown-haired woman greeted her.

"Hi, Joyce," she greeted back, approaching her. "I just want to know, are you guys still selling bags of candy?"

She nodded. "Oh yeah, but they're selling big, so you have to hurry."

She nodded back at her and said, "Thanks." They exchanged smiles

before she left. Joyce wondered why her friend needed another bag. Perhaps Jane found it and hid it? No, Terry would have found it in a jiffy. She told her that she mostly find what Jane hides from her...

Mostly.

The dirty-blonde-haired woman laid the bag of candy on the counter, making Joyce check it out and type something on the cash register. She then said, "\$8.96." Terry got out her wallet and gave her the exact amount with dollar bills and coins. When she put the money in the cash register, she asked, "You need a bag?"

She shook her head. "No, it's fine."

She smiled at her once again. "Okay. But..." Terry looked at her with a concerned look. "Why are you buying another bag of candy?"

Right...she couldn't tell Joyce about Mike. She quickly thought of something and lied, "I wanted to offer more candy to the trick-or-treaters this year."

That wasn't what Joyce expected, making her look pleasantly surprised. "Oh, okay."

Terry did want to ask her something, so she asked, "By the way...how's Will doing?"

The brown-haired woman deeply sighed, looking away from her. "He's trying to be himself again, but he's still having episodes." She looked at her with a worried expression on her face. "He even made this...drawing. It looked like...like some monster was coming up on our home."

That sounded serious, causing Terry to worry as well. "Is he suffering from P.T.S.D.?"

Joyce sighed deeply again. "That's what the doctor said and Hopper as well. I just..." She looked like she was about to cry, making Terry feel bad. "I just want this to be over, I want Will to be happy again."

The dirty-blonde-haired woman firmly but gently grabbed her shoulder and said, "I'm sure Will wants the same thing too. P.T.S.D.

may be permanent and difficult to handle, especially for a boy his age, but he could overcome it. He just needs to build up the strength and he needs support. You, Bob, Jonathan, you're all giving him the support he needs."

She frowned. "But he...he doesn't like it. We all just want him to be safe."

"He's a kid. Of course he's going to act like that. But it's not because he doesn't need it." Joyce looked straight into her friend's eyes. "It's normal for someone like him to want things back to the way they were and not have anyone worry about him. I say, don't bother him about it too much because it might stress him out more, but keep supporting him, whatever he might go through."

She nodded. "It's not like I'm not trying, but...thanks."

Terry smiled at her. "I didn't get a Bachelor's in Psychology for nothing."

She smiled back at her. "Yeah..."

"Excuse me," a man told Terry. The two of them saw him carrying a shopping basket of Halloween-related things.

The dirty-blonde-haired woman got out of his way and said, "Sorry. I'll get going." She then waved her friend goodbye, mouthing, "See you later."

"Bye," Joyce also mouthed out, waving her fingers at her as she left. She then got out the things from the man's shopping basket and punched in the prices for them. Not bother Will about what he was going through because it would stress him out more...she was really worrying about him and really wanted to ask him about the drawing, but since Terry was the one that went to college and got a Bachelor's in Psychology, she won't. If it's to make sure he'll overcome P.T.S.D., she won't.

---

Later, Jonathan drove Will to Jane's house, the two talking about Bob before the boy shrugged and stated, "At least he doesn't treat me any

different." He then looked out the window. "I mean, I can't even go trick-or-treating on my own. It's stupid."

His older brother gave him a sarcastic look. "What? Do you think I'm stupid?"

"No...but it's not like Kali's coming to watch over Jane, you know?" He sighed and looked straight ahead at the road. Since his mom told him not to talk to him about why he was behaving like this since last year, the conversation ended there. Still, he had to know that it was for his own good and protection.

At the same time...he didn't exactly feel like trick-or-treating with his little brother all night...

...

When the car arrived at Jane's house, they both saw the three kids waving and greeting Will specifically, pointing their handmade proton guns at him. Jonathan stopped the car as Will unbuckled himself, coming to a conclusion about how he was going to spend his Halloween. Should he...?

Screw it.

Before Will could leave, he said, "Hey."

The auburn-haired boy looked at him and asked, "Yeah?"

He then gave him a smile. "If I let you go trick-or-treating alone, you promise to stay in the neighborhood?"

The boy's face lit up happily, being pleasantly surprised by his suggestion. "Yeah, of course! Totally!"

"And be back at Jane's by nine?"

He raised an eyebrow. "Nine...thirty?"

"Nine."

Okay, why not? Will was going to relish this opportunity anyway.

"Yeah, okay?"

Jonathan held his hand out to him. "Deal?"

He took his hand and shook it. "Deal!"

"Alright." The boy then opened the door and got out. "Hey, Will!" He looked back as he saw his brother hand him the video camera Bob had. "Don't let any of your ghost-busting friends use this, alright?"

He nodded and took it from him. "Okay."

He then tried to imitate Dracula like Bob did when they left, saying, "I hope it doesn't suuuck!" Will chuckled before closing the door and running up to the rest of his friends.

He heard Jane shout, "Will!"

"Egon!" he also heard Lucas shout. All of them huddled to greet him the way each of them do. He smiled. They were such great friends to him.

Speaking of friends...

He took out the folded flier for the Halloween party out of his pocket and unfolded it to read the information. Once he read it all, he started up the engine and put the flier away, driving off. Usually, he would never go to a party. Not only because he never been invited before, not that it was bad, but also because he wasn't a people person. Kali knew that and she still urged him to go.

Just once...just this once, he'll go. He wanted to see what a party looks like anyway. Plus, if she and Steve happened to get shit-faced during the party, he'll take care of them.

...

Meanwhile, the kids were all looking at the video camera Will had. "Whoa, so it could record videos?" Lucas asked.

Will nodded. "Yeah."

"Man, I thought Hollywood would hoard this kind of shit to themselves," Dustin stated.

Jane looked up at the auburn-haired boy with a smile. "Bob really is awesome!"

He blushed at her smile, but got it away and nodded. "R-right, he is." After all, he treated him like he wasn't a dumb toddler that can't help himself. Plus, he was a tech expert and worked at RadioShack. What else would make him more awesome?

"Alright, alright, let's not dwell on the video camera for too long," the curly-haired boy told everyone else. "Let's go get some candy."

"Yeah!" the kids replied off-sync. They then walked off, singing the Ghostbusters theme among themselves.

...

Just as they left, Terry began to drive away too. She couldn't help but smile at them having fun and being friends. It seemed like Will wouldn't be accompanied by anyone else in the Byers family, including Bob. Maybe Joyce did take her advice to heart. She hoped the best for him. She also knew she could trust Jane to be on her own, so she also hoped that whatever happens to Will, Jane will be right there for him.

On the other hand...there was Mike.

When she exited the neighborhood, she let out a deep sigh, feeling pretty guilty about not having Mike get out and go trick-or-treating. It would still look suspicious and she couldn't let him and Jane cross paths...as much as it hurt her to do so...like keeping him a secret from her.

---

**Done! What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**How did I write the original scenes with Terry? I figured that I should write her interactions with Hopper and Joyce more just to show her real relationships with the two of them. I hoped I**

**wrote them well!**

**Review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**



## 29. Why Don't We Go Crazy Together?

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

**\*WARNING:** There will be some mild racism from you know who...\*

**\*ALSO,** this chapter will be a little longer than usual.\*

---

It was night time in Tina's home, having a bunch of teenagers in many different costumes coming in, dancing, drinking, smoking, making out...as teen parties go. Kali and Steve were inside, both of them dressing like Joel Goodsen and Lana from the movie Risky Business. They were mildly grooving to the rock music playing until a familiar said, "Look who became our new Keg King, Harrington!" They both looked to see the new guy, Billy, smoking and wearing a sexy biker's outfit, with Tommy H., the one who said that.

"Yeah, that's right!" shouted a teenage guy from the crowd.

"Eat it, Harrington!" another teenage guy shouted to him.

Both looked irritated at them, Steve removing his sunglasses and looking at him. While he didn't respond, the blonde-haired guy looked at Kali and asked Tommy, "That her?"

He nodded. "Yeah, that's the bitch." The Indian girl's glare became sharp.

Billy chuckled, looking at the couple. "He stopped being the King to become part of a circus act? The Man Who Fucks a Monkey-"

"Piss off," Steve told him in a sharp voice.

Kali could beat the shit out of him right now, but she didn't want to get in trouble, so she decided to walk away. She eventually reached to the foggy punch bowl after passing one girl pouring beer into a guy's mouth. She saw a guy in a poorly-made Caesar costume drink from the punch bowl, her asking, "What's in here?"

When he swallowed the punch, he shouted, "Pure fuel! PURE! FUEL! WHOOO!" He banged his chest and burped before drinking more from the punch. This could be a nice escape from all the bullshit plaguing her...

Steve left Billy and Tommy to find her, seeing that she was drinking a red cup from the foggy punch bowl. He instantly felt worried and walked towards her, saying, "Whoa, whoa, whoa! Take it easy, Kal! Take it easy!" He touched her arm, making her stop drinking and face him. "Kal, just take it easy."

She felt annoyed by his action, so she replied, "Steve, you said we should be stupid teenagers for tonight. That's the deal, wasn't it?" He didn't answer, drawing his lips to a thin line. That was what he said, but...

She scooped up from of the punch by her cup and drank more of it, a few drops of it running down the side of her mouth. When she drank it all, she wiped the running drops and got back into the crowd. He deeply sighed and followed her into it, just in case that son of a bitch Billy throws more racist shit at her.

---

As Terry drove to the cabin, she began thinking about the...what happened between her and him some time after they found Mike. She will admit, despite loving and caring for her daughters...she was getting lonely. She wouldn't let it get to her though...until that night.

She saw the secret entrance to the woods, so she turned into that path. When the cabin was in sight, she parked in the usual space and turned off the engine. She grabbed the bag of candy from the back of the car and got out of it. She walked to the door and performed the special knock to get in. She heard Mike unlock all of the locks with his powers, making her open the door and come in.

She saw Mike sitting on the couch and watching the television. They both looked at each other and smiled. "Hey," she greeted him, closing the door behind her. "I got the candy." He smiled and leaped up from his couch to approach her. "Where's Hopper?"

He shook his head at her. "Not here yet."

That made her look concerned. "He's not here?" He shook his head. She shrugged. "Maybe he's running late."

Now he was in front of her. "Candy?"

She chuckled and got the bag away from him. "Not until Hopper comes back and-" Suddenly, she felt it suddenly get out of her hand and into his. She looked shocked as he grinned a little, a small amount of blood dripping from his nose. "Mike!" He wiped away the small amount of blood with his nose and chuckled a little. She gave him a stern look and crossed her arms. "You're not eating that candy until Hopper comes back, okay?"

He raised his eyebrows. "When is he coming?"

That was a good question. "He'll probably be here soon. We'll have to wait until then." He nodded before she smiled at him again and suggested, "Do you mind if I watch TV with you?" He shook his head and they both sat down to watch the sitcom he was watching.

---

When the Party rang the doorbell and the door opened, they all shouted, "Trick or treat!"

An older woman with auburn-red hair and a bowl of candy smiled and cooed, "Awwwww~! Aren't you all cute little exterminators~?" All of their smiles faded when they heard that. She was an old lady, she probably doesn't know about the Ghostbusters.

They all grabbed handfuls of the 3 Musketeers, put it in their bags, and went on their way. Lucas groaned. "I swear, if I get another 3 Musketeers, I'm gonna kill myself..."

Dustin looked at him. "What's wrong with 3 Musketeers?"

The black-haired boy gave him a baffled look. "What's wrong with 3 Musketeers?"

Jane scoffed. "No one likes 3 Musketeers, Dustin."

"Yeah," Will chimed in. "It's all just nougat."

"Whoa-ho-ho, 'just nougat'?" He nodded at him. "Just nougat? Come on, it's top three for me!"

The rest of the kids looked appalled at that claim. "Top three?" Lucas asked.

"Top...three!"

The tomboy shook her head, muttering, "Give me a break..."

"No, seriously, I can eat a WHOLE bowl of nougat, straight up!" The rest of the kids shook their heads, though they'd like to see him actually try-

Suddenly, a figure in a Michael Myers mask popped out in front of them and screamed, waving a knife in front of them. They all screamed, Lucas's scream being even more girlier and high-pitched than Jane's. The figure laughed as they pulled off their mask...revealing to be no other than Max. "Holy shit, you should've seen the looks on your faces!" she said with a grin. Jane rolled her eyes and crossed her arms at the sight of her as she looked at Lucas. "And you, what the hell was that? You scream like a little girl!" Lucas always did, the whole Party knew, much to his embarrassment.

As the red-haired girl began to walk away, the entire Party just stood there, Jane seeing Dustin and Lucas look at her like she was all special. As if. Will looked at her and frowned. She was definitely being bothered by Max, he knew it. The red-haired girl stopped and turned back at them, suggesting, "You guys coming or not? I heard we should hit up Loch Nora. It's where the rich people live, right?" She looked pretty enthusiastic about this, walking away again and giggling.

Dustin and Lucas looked just as enthusiastic, not only about hitting up Loch Nora, but also coming with her. "Yeah!" they both shouted to her, running after her.

The auburn-haired boy nudged the curly-haired girl a little, getting her attention. "Come on, Jane. Let's follow them." She only replied with a deep sigh as they both walked up to join the group. Jane thought that this night could have been better if she hadn't shown up.

Now she'll have Dustin and Lucas acting like googly-eyed morons all night. At least Will wasn't affected.

---

After the sitcom they watched ended, Mike kept flipping channels, still holding the bag of candy. Terry was in the bathroom, doing her business. While she was washing her hands, she heard him watch an old romantic drama movie with a puzzled look on her face. She remembered her mother watching it whenever it came on television. When she got out...he looked so...forlorn watching it.

The woman in the movie walked away from the man to cry and sob, reminding Mike of Jane's cry and sobs. The man in the movie walked towards her and hugged her. That was what Mike wanted to do to Jane during those moments, but...

He then saw the two kiss after talking, now reminding Mike about his first kiss with her. Love...the woman in the movie used the word love. And then they pressed their lips together after she said love. Love...

He sniffed, his eyes blurry as he muttered, "Jane..." He let out a heavy sigh, missing her so much...

Terry looked so heartbroken to see him like this, but was shocked to hear him mutter her daughter's name after seeing a scene like that. Why? Slowly, she walked towards him and sat next to him, startling him and making him change the channel to a commercial. He wiped his eyes as she asked, "Mike, what's wrong?" He let out another heavy sigh and looked down at the ground, not answering for a bit. He just...he just...

Suddenly, they both heard beeping, looking up to see the radio beeping out the Morse Code. The two of them stood up, Mike putting the bag of candy down as they both approached it. The freckled boy then looked at the Morse Code chart, pointing at the letters according to the beeps. "L..." he read out loud as he then pointed at another letter. "A..." Then another. "T..." And finally one more. "E." Both him and Terry looked a little shocked at this. "Late?"

"He's going to be late?" Terry asked, shaking her head. "What in the

world are you doing, Jim...?" He DID know that he promised Mike that they would all get together and watch a movie while eating candy, right? Hours of waiting while watching old and new horror movies that came on and still no sign of him until now.

She looked at Mike's face, seeing that it was sad. She frowned at that as he began to remember something else last year...

---

*It was snowing and cold, Mike dressed as warmly as he could be with the clothing he stole from the hunter. He carried a dead squirrel with one hand, walking through the snow-covered woods in search of a place to camp out.*

*However, he suddenly stopped when he saw something just a few feet away from him. His eyes widened in surprise before walking towards it. When he crouched down, he saw a snow-covered box, wondering why it was here. He wiped the snow off of the top of the box with his sleeve before opening it up. He gasped when he saw two containers of food inside, a tub of vanilla ice cream, and a couple of wrapped Eggos. He was so hungry, even after eating squirrels all this time...*

*He looked around, seeing if anyone was around. This could be somebody else's food box...*

*When the coast was clear, he dropped the dead squirrel, grabbed the food, and stacked them on top of each other, the Eggos being at the top while the tub of ice cream was at the bottom. He then ran as fast as he could with the food, hoping to never drop them.*

---

"Michael?" Terry asked, the boy snapping out of his flashback and looking up at her. "Are you alright?"

He wished he was.

He faced the radio and turned it off, saying, "We do this without him." He then stormed to the couch, seeing that the old Frankenstein movie was playing. He opened up the bag of candy again, taking out a bag of Skittles and opening that up.

She looked worried at him, saying, "Mike-"

"It's been too long. I want to do this, even if he's not around." She let out a deep sigh. She couldn't help but feel a little frustrated at him too, wondering what the hell was taking him so long. She knew he was a police chief, but...investigations wouldn't take this long.

She walked and sat next to him as he ate the Skittles, grabbing the bag herself and getting some Starbursts to eat. They then proceeded to watch Frankenstein together.

---

In Loch Nora, the Party and Max had gotten themselves better candy than before, even full-sized bars. "Another full-size!" cheered Dustin, walking with Max and Lucas. "I swear, rich people are suckers!" He looked at her when he suddenly thought of something. "Wait, you're not rich, are you?"

As those three walked and talked with a fun and friendly air around them, Will recorded them having fun talking to each other. As much as he liked that Max was friendly, for the most part, he was worried about Jane, so he looked at her, seeing that she was visibly upset. Frowning, he asked, "Jane?"

She looked at him and replied, "Did you agree to this?"

He put down the video camera. "Agree to what?"

"To HER..." She tilted her head towards Max. "...joining the Party."

He shook his head. "Well, no. I voted no because...you don't seem to like her."

She looked surprised that he knew that. At the same time, they've been best friends for years. "Well...yeah." She looked forward. "But you should have checked up with me."

The auburn-haired boy felt bad. "Sorry..."

She sighed and crossed her arms, still holding her bag of candy. "Don't worry. She might've still joined if I voted no too."

He didn't want the tomboy to strike up any problems with her, so he had to defuse her dislike to her. "She doesn't seem that bad though." She now gave him a baffled look. "Maybe you should be friends with her."

She huffed and walked faster than he did. "As if. She's ruining the best night of the year." He stopped when he saw her storm into the driveway of a fancy cul-de-sac. He stopped and felt worried for her. She really shouldn't act like this. Why was she acting like this? He had to know.

As he walked up to the driveway though...a few teenagers in masks scared him...

And initiated another episode.

...

While being given the good candy by someone old that didn't know what any of them were supposed to be, even Max, the curly-haired girl suddenly heard Will yell through the music and talking, "Jane?!" She turned back, seeing Will look up at nothing. "JANE?!" He walked forward a little. "JAAAAANE!" She instantly looked scared and worried, wondering why he was shouting her name like that.

After given the candy, she instantly turned around and yelled, "Will?!" The rest of the kids turned around to see him standing around, Max looking puzzled while the two other boys looked worried.

"Oh shit," Dustin muttered, seeing that he was open for bullies.

"What? What's going on with him?" Max asked.

Jane began to run towards him, shouting, "Will!" He began to run away too, to another cul-de-sac home. She saw him going down to the end of the house, so she went to that end too. As she was going down, she heard him heavily breathing...and whimpering. She needed to snap him out of it now.

She grabbed his arm, making him scream a little before she shouted, "Will?!" That got him out of the episode and looking at Jane's



completely worried face. She then grabbed both of his shoulders and asked, "Are you okay? What's wrong?" He was shaking and panting, but looking into her eyes...he began to calm down before looking around, seeing that that...that thing wasn't around. "Why were you shouting my name? What's going on?!" He looked at her worried face again, looking very melancholic to see that. She wasn't supposed to see that...he...

"HOLY SHIT!" the curly-haired boy exclaimed, him, Lucas, and Max going down the stairs and seeing him curled up like a ball.

"Is he okay?" Lucas asked Jane.

"I-I don't know..." she replied, looking at him again. His eyes were still wide and he was still breathing heavily, though it wasn't in quick succession now, so she thought of something. "I'll get you home, okay? I'll get you home, so hold on." She slowly got him up on his feet, wrapping her arm around his shoulders. Dustin was about to help, but Jane said to stop him, "It's fine, I got him."

He stepped back, looking puzzled at that. "Jane?"

She gave him a rather sharp glare and even to Lucas and Max. "You guys can keep trick-or-treating. I'm getting tired anyway." The two then got up the stairs, Will seeing the look on her face, that same upset face...plus, her seeing him having that episode...

As if this night wasn't depressing enough.

Meanwhile, Max looked at the two other boys, asking what was wrong with Will and the two of them not answering. She guessed it must be something serious since he looked like he was in a horror movie. She let out a deep sigh and decided to ask something else to break the sadness in the air. "Also...you guys never told me that you were friends with a girl."

They looked at her, their solemn faces disappearing. "Oh yeah," Dustin stated. "That's her."

She felt stupid for not recognizing her as one before. "Oh, I thought she was a guy..."

"She does look like a guy and she knows that, but don't tease her about it. She's kind of sensitive about that." She nodded, looking at her and Will disappear out of their sights. She never knew there was another girl like her in this kind of town. Maybe...maybe she should be friends with her? At the same time, she looked like she wasn't in the mood earlier...

---

Jonathan finally arrived at the party, getting inside the house to see lots of costumed teenagers dancing to Duran Duran. It was pretty crowded here, that's for sure. He moved out of the way of two girls walking before talking to one named Samantha, who mistook his regular clothes as a costume. She seems nice.

He looked around to see if Steve and Kali were around before spotting them jamming out to the music, Kali drinking from a red solo cup. At least they seem to be having a fun time. Still, if either or both of them got shitfaced, he knew what to do.

He faced Samantha again and continued talking to her.

...

Kali went to the punch bowl to get more of that "pure fuel", but Steve followed her and tried to stop her by holding her arm. "No, no, Kali, that's enough," he sternly told her.

"Get off, Steve..." she sternly demanded him.

"That's enough, you had enough, okay?" He tried to pull her away, but she got out of his grasp by pushing him away.

"Screw you!" She headed to the bowl again and scooped up even more punch than she had before.

He held her hand holding the cup and said, "I'm serious, Kal. Stop it! Hey, hey, hey, stop!" She tried to tug her hand away from his, but he had a firm grip. "Put that down."

She now looked angered at him. "Hell no."

"Kal, put it down."

"You're not my mum!"

"Stop, stop!" His hand slipped as she tugged away...splashing the punch onto her white dress. She gasped, everyone near them exclaiming things. In fact, everyone inside stopped dancing to see that happen.

She saw that they had an audience, making her feel so embarrassed. She then looked at Steve with a frustrated look, throwing her cup on the ground and shoving him away as she walked to the bathroom. The jock quickly regained his balance and followed her to the bathroom as well.

Billy and Tommy chuckled, the freckled teen saying, "Now THAT'S a circus act!"

Jonathan looked worried. Perhaps Kali was drunk and Steve wasn't. He hoped that idiot would resolve that situation, since it did look ugly...

...

As the two entered into the bathroom, the short-haired girl grabbed a hand-towel and soaked it in water as her boyfriend closed the door. Steve frowned and felt shitty for what he did, so he told her, "Kal, I'm sorry." She didn't answer him as she wiped her stain with the hand-towel. He sighed and stated, "That's not gonna come off."

"I-it will..." she replied, sounding like she was choking up and looking like she was about to cry. That made him feel more shitty.

He got right next to her and patted her arm, saying, "Come on, I'll take you home. Come here." She sniffled, her eyes tearing up. Feeling even MORE shitty than before, he wrapped his arm around her shoulders. "Come on, let me take you home."

"Why isn't this coming OFF?!" she yelled, throwing the hand-towel at the sink and sobbing.

Oh God, this situation just keeps going down south...

"Kal-"

She whipped her head towards him and yelled, "Why did you want this?!"

He shook his head, looking forlorn. "I didn't, I kept telling you to stop drinking."

She covered her face with her hands, crying. "I'm so stupid..."

That statement broke his heart to hear from her. "Kal, you're not-"

"I AM!" She looked at him with teary eyes and wet cheeks. "I didn't listen to you because I wanted to act stupid like you said...I pointed a gun at you last year to get you out...I..." The more she talked, the more forlorn he looked. "I argued with Barbara before she DIED! I argued with her because I just wanted to spend the night with you..." Steve had never felt so shitty in his entire life, not even when he broke girls' hearts back when he was a douchebag. "I cared more about being in your pants than my own best friend's feelings!" She covered her face again and continued crying and sobbing. "I'm such an idiot!"

As she cried and sobbed more, he felt so horrible. Not only because he hated seeing Kali cry and sob like this...but also because of what she said about Barbara. To be honest, he always felt guilty, that guilt skyrocketing by a million now. But even if he felt horrible...Kali must have felt worse, MUCH worse. He had to comfort her, no matter what, like a good boyfriend.

He pulled her in for a hug and whispered, "Hey, it's alright. You're not an idiot..." She cried into his costume as he gently caressed her hair. "I am." He said that to her...and himself. Because really, if they haven't dated...none of this shit would have happened.

...

After what felt like hours, Kali had cried herself to sleep, slinking off of Steve's hold before he held her up firmly. He needed to get her back home now, so he wrapped her arm around his shoulder and began to exit the bathroom and soon the house, carrying her like he did.

Jonathan saw him carry a sleeping Kali out of the party. Did she pass out? Steve wouldn't low enough to strike her since he really did love her. At least Steve wasn't drunk, so he was able to get her home. That meant he was done here.

He waved Samantha goodbye before exiting the party, seeing Steve place Kali on the passenger's seat and closing the door. He decided to not approach him and asked what happened. Maybe it would be better if he didn't know. What happened in that bathroom was their business, after all. When Steve drove away with Kali, Jonathan decided to go to his car to go pick up his little brother.

---

In the Ives home, Jane and Will had their candy spread out across the living room table, the girl listening to her best friend talk about what's been happening to him. "It's like...I'm stuck," he told her.

"Like...stuck in the Upside Down?" she asked him.

He shook his head. "No...like you know when you look through a View-Master..." He paused to make the motion with his hands. "It gets caught between..."

She figured out what he was saying. "Like it's stuck between two slides?"

He nodded at her. "Yeah, exactly that. One slide's our world...and the other's...the Upside Down." The tomboy looked solemn, seeing the scared look on his face. "And...there's this noise, this awful noise coming from everywhere. And then...I saw something..." He remembered that...monster, that colossal monster.

"Is it the Demogorgon?"

He shook his head again. "No, it...it's huge, like...skyscraper-huge." Her eyes widened at that. "It was like a huge shadow in the sky...only...it was alive...it was moving...coming for me."

Something that large and that scary-looking...that made the Demogorgon look harmless. "Is...is this all real? Or is it all in your head, like the doctors say?"

He frowned, looking worried now. "I don't know, just..." He looked at her with pleading eyes. "Don't tell the others, okay? They wouldn't understand."

She nodded at him, giving him a reassuring smile. "Of course." He kind of smiled back at her, knowing he could trust her to keep a secret. She then thought of a certain someone, saying, "If Mike were here, he would understand."

The friend that helped her and everyone else find him...he will admit, he was special and if he meets him again, he'll have to thank him. "He would."

Sadly smiling now, she nodded. "Yes. Mike always understood everything." She looked down at the candy, her smile now disappearing. "Sometimes...I feel like I still see him, like...he's actually around, but..." She shook her head, sighing heavily. "He's not, not anymore. Sometimes, I feel like I'm just going crazy." The look on her face while talking about Mike seemed like she missed him a lot. He wondered what Mike was to her...

But that wasn't important right now, because... "I feel like I'm going crazy too."

She looked at him and gave him a half-smile, suggesting, "Hey, if we're both going to go crazy, then...why don't we go crazy together?" He smiled at that, chuckling a little as he returned the gaze.

"Yeah...go crazy together." They both continued to smile at each other before Jane moved closer to him and...hugged him. He blushed and his heart raced at that action. He decided to return it, the two feeling comforted now, though Jane's feeling of comfort was different from Will's. Still, they needed comfort after a bad night like this.

---

Steve's car arrived at the Ives home. He got out of it and managed to get a dozing Kali out carefully. He decided to carry her princess-style this time as he approached to the house and opened the door. He went in and closed it behind him with his back before going upstairs to her bedroom. He opened the door and went to her bed, laying her on it. He slowly removed her boots and covered her up with her

blanket, the girl's head moving to the right as she slept. He sighed, never forgetting about her breakdown in the bathroom. God...not even his most nastiest breakup could top that.

He gave her a warm hug for several seconds, the girl stirring but still sleeping. He then let her go gently before he walked out of her room, feeling the most shittiest he's ever felt in his life.

---

Mike and Terry were done with eating candy and watching horror movies, the two of them being full from the candy. He was in his room with the TV still on while Terry just sat on the couch, still remembering that he was near tears after watching that scene from that romantic drama. She really wanted to know why he was that way.

Suddenly, she heard a knock on the door...the secret knock. She sighed, standing up from the couch and walking to it. She removed the locks and Jim himself opened the door. He looked around for Mike, the woman stating, "He's in his room."

He got in and closed the door, removing his hat and coat. "Did you two...?" he began to ask.

She knew what he was going to ask, so she nodded. "He insisted. Sorry."

He shook his head, removing his shoes as well. "Don't be. Better you than no one at all."

She then whispered, "What took you?"

"Work," he whispered back.

That began to worry her a little. "What, is something going on?"

"Later." He walked past her and knocked on the door to Mike's room, Terry frowning. "Hey, kid, open up. I know I'm late." There was no answer, making him feel bad for being late. "I got...I got, uh, stuck somewhere and lost track of time." Clearly, that was a lie, and that still left no type of answer from Mike. "And I'm sorry." Still no answer. "Mike, can you please open the door?" Still silence from him.

"Mike?" He deeply sighed and got away from the door, sitting on the couch and rubbing his face.

"Jim..." The dirty-blond-haired woman decided to sit next to him and press a hand onto his shoulder.

"Did he enjoy it?" She drew her lips to a thin line when she saw his solemn face, but nodded. "That's good, at least." He spotted the nearly-empty bag of candy and grabbed it.

"He'll come around, Jim."

"How? He likes you more than me."

She looked away from him, thinking about what to say to him. "You can give him the rest of the candy for breakfast?"

He scoffed, grinning a little. "I'm gonna bribe for his respect?"

She sighed. "He's a kid. He's going to act like that. Besides, you're the father he never had. You care for him more than that bastard Ted ever did. Remember that."

Now he sighed, knowing she was right. "You're the mother he never had."

"And will that you stop from being the father?"

"Terry..."

"I'm serious. No one said that raising a kid, especially a boy like him, would be easy. I know and you would too, right?"

Again, she had a point. She was right. "Yeah..."

...

In his room, Mike overheard what they said, feeling bad, but still upset. Hopper was right though, he liked Terry more than him...despite her not wanting him to see Jane again...

Why wouldn't she let him see Jane again?



He sighed and looked at the static fuzz the TV now had, holding a cloth he would use as a blindfold and wrapping it around his eyes. He tried to drown out all of his senses so he could see her tonight...after a moment and hearing echoing voices...

---

*He was there, in the darkness...the cold darkness.*

*There, from the corner of his eye...he saw the handmade fort...and Jane sitting in it with her walkie-talkie.*

*"It's day 353..." she said solemnly into the device. He looked sad as he began to approach her. "I...didn't have the best day of my life today. I feel...I don't know..." She looked like she was about to cry, stating, "I wish you were here, Mike."*

*He wished he was there as well.*

*"We all do, but...I miss you...a lot." Seeing her about to cry made him want to cry. He got in front of her and crouched down. "Please...if you're out there, just...give me a sign, anything that would tell me that you're still out there." He deeply sighed...then she slowly looked up at him, her eyes sad.*

*After a few seconds, he asked, "Jane?"*

*She gasped, pressing the walkie-talkie right to her ear.*

---

*"Michael?" she asked, trying to hear for an answer, any answer from him.*

---

*He couldn't truly answer her...because of them. However...he like to touch her again.*

*He slowly raised his hand up to her cheek to caress it, but then she suddenly began to shorten the antennae, muttering...*

---

*"Stupid feedback." She then got up...*

---

*And walked away from the fort. He could only look at her go, feeling horrible. He couldn't answer her...and he always had to watch her leave...*

---

He aggressively removed his blindfold, his nose bleeding, before breathing sharply and looking down, his fingers digging into his hair. He decided to let a couple tears out...because he missed her...so much...

And he just wanted to see her again, not in the darkness...in real life.

But he couldn't.

Because they didn't allow him.

---

**Done! What do you guys think about this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed? Sorry that this is longer than usual. I wrote from Jonathan's arrival at the party to the end in one go on Monday. Hope you guys don't mind!**

**At least Terry and Mike get to eat candy and watch horror movies together. Hopper missed out.**

**So...that scene at the party where Kali's drunk was significantly changed from the canon. While the canon scene with Nancy was the most strained point of her relationship with Steve, I decided to have that scene signify Kali's guilt for what happened to Barb. From that one scene in Episode 7, I can kind of see her face when El left as something of self-blame. I can see her blaming herself for things that happened, so that's why I made her an emotional drunk and cry about why she doesn't like herself for doing the things she did before. I can also see Steve being supportive of her during something like that, despite not being a situation like that before. I hope I wrote those scenes with them well.**

**I hope that wasn't OOC of Jane to hug Will like she did. She just needs a hug in general.**

**I also thought it'd make sense for Mike to like Terry more than**

Hopper because really, she took care of him when he was younger and was more soft on him...mostly.

Poor Mike though, even if he likes Terry, he still couldn't tell Jane anything...

Anyways, review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

### 30. When Is Soon?

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

*Another cold and snowy night, Terry and Hopper appeared, holding containers of food for Mike as they approached the box. They were completely unaware of the fact that Mike peered over at them from a good distance, hiding behind a tree. He looked surprised to see that those two were the ones leaving the food in the box. As they crouched down and placed the food (and Eggos) in, Terry said in a whisper, "Not to be rude or anything, but..." He looked at her after looking around to make sure no one else was near. "Why did you want to find him? I'm the one who knew him before."*

*He chuckled before they both stood up and closed the box. "Personally, I think the kid deserves better," he answered. "I mean, my dad wasn't as shitty as Wheeler, but...he was still shitty." Mike's eyes widened at what he said. He thought he deserved better? "I want to treat him better than he did to me, and Wheeler to him. Don't you think he deserves better?"*

*She scoffed. "What do you think, Hopper? Of course I think he deserves better...a lot better." He chuckled again. Mike felt his heart warm up at Terry saying that too. Should he...?*

*They began to leave, making him think faster about what he should do. Accept the food...or join them.*

*As the two adults began to walk out of the woods, Terry continued, "It's horrible there. I keep seeing the subjects and they looked so..." She trailed off, thinking about the sadness in the subjects' faces and also their hurt ones. "I can't even imagine what they did to him there..."*

*"Hey." The man placed a gentle, but firm hand on her shoulder to comfort her. "At least you quit and told Brenner what the hell was wrong with him and Wheeler."*

*A sad smile appeared on her face. "Yeah..." She shook her head, the smile disappearing. "Even so, I felt so guilty for abandoning them..." She WAS relieved that she wasn't working there anymore, but that didn't stop them*

*from continuing the experiments with the subjects. Hopper, to be honest with himself, didn't know how to reassure her when she said that, making him feel terrible. However, she then said, "I hope Dr. Owens keeps his word that he wouldn't run the Lab like they did."*

*Since she had told him about her visit with this Dr. Owens, he thought the same. "Me too."*

*They remained silent for a bit, then something came up in Hopper's mind. "Hey." Terry looked up at him. "When you tried to convince me to take you into my investigation and I asked you about your job, you said 'they' can wait." She sighed. How Hopper remembered that was beyond her knowledge, but her and her stupid mouth... "If ya don't mind me asking, what's the other job?"*

*She crossed her arms, taking a deep breath. Since they have gotten a bit closer...but then, he's a police officer...*

*As they were going to exit the forest, they heard footsteps, making them both stop and look back to see who was following them. Finally, in their sights was...*

*Michael.*

*Hopper removed his hat from the sight of him, looking as surprised as Terry was. The freckled boy looked at Hopper before looking at Terry, relieved to see her the most. She sighed blissfully, smiling as she walked towards him. "Michael." She then hugged him, in which he returned, holding each other tight and feeling happy to see each other again. Hopper just looked at them with a bit of a smile on his face. At least they were happy to see each other.*

*They stopped hugging, the boy looking at Hopper now. In his usual plainspoken manner, he greeted, "Hey, kid."*

*He seemed nice, so he greeted back, "Hey."*

---

*Mike couldn't believe that was several months ago. It felt like yesterday, that happened...*

*Even though Jim and Terry tucked him to bed, he was still awake,*

staring at the ceiling. He couldn't sleep because...

Well...because of Jane.

He wanted to see her so bad...Terry and Hopper knew that, but he actually wants to see her, in real life. But he couldn't...

The door suddenly opened and he saw the dirty-blond-haired woman herself. She was surprised to see him awake, since she was only going to give him a kiss goodnight on his forehead. Hopper was already sleeping on the couch.

"Mike?" she whispered, closing the door behind her and approaching him, the boy sitting up. "You shouldn't be awake right now."

"I know."

"Well, you should go to sleep."

He shook his head. "I can't."

She frowned, thinking of why. "It's because of Jane, isn't it?" He nodded, making her sigh deeply. "Michael, I'm sorry, I really am." She placed her hand on his arm. "But for your own sake, and hers, you two can't be in contact with each other at all. It's for both of your safeties, okay?" He frowned at her, not answering. She sighed again. "Believe me, you're keeping her safe by doing this." Still no answer. Hopefully, he would come around.

As she laid him back down, he asked, "Terry?" She stopped what she was doing and looked at him, her expression wanting to know what he wanted. "What is...love?"

Oh God...well, he had to be curious after watching that scene from that movie, right?

She lowered herself down, keeping eye contact with him, as she answered, "It's...hard to explain it for you to understand." He still looked at her, wanting more of an answer, so she continued, "It's a feeling that differs depending on something."

He looked interested. "Like what?"

"Like...what you have for ice cream and Eggos." He looked a bit puzzled. "Don't you really like those things?" He nodded. "That's one type of love." He seemed to understand that. "Another type is...for a person, though there's two types of love you could have for a person." He shifted himself, laying on his side now. "One type of love for a person is like...being their friend. You care about them and will do anything for them."

"Friend..." he murmured out, thinking about Lucas and Dustin. The way she described it to reminded him of how Jane explained "friend" to him last year.

"The other type...it's..." She took a deep breath. "It's for someone you think of as...more than a friend." His eyes widened as he gasped, recognizing those last few words. "Like a friend, you care about them and will do anything for them, but also...you want to...be with them."

"Be with them?"

She tried to remember how her own mother described love to her when she was little. "You want them to be your...partner. You think about them all the time and...you want to be by their side forever. You feel all weird inside whenever they're near you, but they feel good. You really like who they are...you just want to be with them for the rest of your life." She paused for a bit. "That's another love you can have for a person." The freckled boy blushed when he thought about his feelings toward Jane, since...what Terry said mirrored them.

She saw the shocked look on his face, chuckling a little and rubbing the top of his head. "You'll understand more when you get older, okay?" She hoped he would. She brushed up his bangs and gave him a kiss on the forehead, him feeling weird because of her doing that. His love for her was like a friend...

As she was about to leave, he said in realization, "I love Jane."

Those three words made Terry freeze in her spot. She slowly looked back at him with wide eyes and asked, "What did you say?"

He sat up again, repeating, "I love Jane."

Love did come in different forms... "As...a friend?"

He shook his head again. "More than a friend."

Those words made her breath hitch.

Him and her daughter...that was just a playful passing thought one time. To hear him say that...

"Go to sleep, Mike," she told him. "I'll see you in the morning." She then exited his room and closed the door behind her. She never expected to have so many different feelings about him loving Jane as more than a friend. On one hand, it made sense to her after all this time and after seeing how much he cares for her, but on the other...this would definitely complicate things.

She deeply sighed as she then exited the cabin to get into her car and drive away.

Meanwhile, Mike sighed and laid back down on his bed. Was Terry mad at him saying that? Was he not supposed to say that? It was true. By what Terry told him...he loved Jane. He always loved Jane...

...

The boy was sleeping for a while, now being morning. "Rise and shine, bud," he heard Hopper greet him. He opened his half-lidded eyes and saw him at the doorway. Tired of him, he shifted himself to his side, not looking at him. The police chief expected that. "Still not talking, huh?" He stayed silent, still upset at him breaking his promise to be there last night. "Alright, I guess I'll just, uh, enjoy this Triple-decker Eggo Extravaganza without you." The boy's eyes enlarged at that. Triple-decker Eggo Extravaganza? He may not know what "triple-decker" and "extravaganza" meant...

But it sounded delicious already.

...

On both of their plates were three stacked Eggos, whipped cream filling their gaps, a scoop of strawberry ice cream topping them like cherries, and having being decorated with Hershey's Kisses, M&Ms,



and jelly beans. Jim mentally thanked Terry for the idea of serving him candy for breakfast in the morning. He just added more flair to it.

While he was cutting through his Triple-decker Eggo Extravaganza, the freckled boy, who now wore a multi-colored sweater, dark jeans, and white socks, carefully scooped up the ice cream with the candy on it and ate that. "Mmm-MMM~!" Jim nearly sang in delight when he took his bite, chewed it, and swallowed it. "It's good, right?" He looked up at him and nodded before taking the top Eggo with his fork and taking a bite out of that. "The best part about this is that it's only 8,500 calories." The boy nodded again before taking another bite of his Eggo. This was delicious, as he expected.

Jim looked at the TV wire leading up to his room. He frowned before looking at the boy once again. "Terry let you visit her last night?"

Mike didn't nod and looked down at his Triple-decker Eggo Extravaganza. "Jane says she misses me," he answered.

He gave the boy a forgiving look. "Want me or Terry to go check up on her?" Mike shook his head.

Speak of the devil, they both heard the special knock on the door. Mike looked back and used his power to unlock it. In came Terry herself, now wearing a blue and red plaid shirt, dark jeans, and heels. Thursdays always marked her day off, so she usually hangs out with the boys for the rest of the day, leaving a note to her daughters that she was out buying...whatever came to mind. She closed the door behind her and kicked off her heels, seeing the breakfast the two were having. She laughed before looking at Jim and asked, "You took my suggestion seriously?"

He chuckled and grinned as she approached the table. "What, I'm not supposed to?"

"YOU didn't take it seriously last night." She got a closer look at the food. "Jesus, Jim, you're spoiling him! Eggos, whipped cream, ice cream..." She playfully pushed him a little, the man continuing to chuckle. Mike only smiled a little before making it disappear. "Anyway, were you two talking about anything?"

Jim's face turned serious as he told her, "The kid misses Jane."

Her face turned serious as well, looking at the boy and pulling up the extra chair to sit next to him. "Hey..." She placed a hand on his shoulder. "I know how much you miss Jane." Especially under the context of his feelings for her.

"Me too," Jim chimed in.

"And I know she misses you just as much." It would explain how she was when she disappeared. Her grip on his shoulder then became a little more firm. "But Jim and I keep telling you, it's too dangerous. In fact...you're the last thing she needs right now." Mike gave a sort of glare at her, but she kept her cool and gave him a face of reassurance.

Jim did as well, adding, "You'll see her soon, we both promise." Mike now looked at him. "And not just in that head of yours, in real life."

"Yes, Jim's making progress with those people. We'll make sure you really get to see her, okay?"

They both looked sincere saying those things...Mike wondered why. "Friends...don't...lie," he told the both of them.

Their reassuring faces dropped at a dime and were replaced with surprised ones. "What?" the police chief asked him.

"You guys said 'soon' on Day 21. You guys said 'soon' on Day 205." Terry released a sigh of guilt while Jim just looked away. "Now you guys say 'soon' on Day 326?" His voice became sharp when he said that.

"Mike..." the woman muttered.

"What, now you're counting the days like you're in some sort of prison?" Jim sarcastically asked him.

"When is 'soon'?" the boy asked them both, keeping the sharp tone of his voice.

Terry placed her hand on her temples as Jim answered, "'Soon' is

when...it's not dangerous anymore-"

"And when is that?" Neither of them answered, much to his irritation.  
"What? Will be it on Day 500?"

"Mike, we don't know-" Terry answered before getting cut off.

"600?"

"We don't know, Mike!" Jim yelled at him.

"700? 800?!"

"Mike-"

"900?! 1000?!"

"MICHAEL!" Terry yelled at him.

He glared her angrily and yelled, "Why can't you tell her about me?!  
You are her MOM!"

She glared back at him sternly and replied, "You know why, now cut the attitude!"

"I NEED to see her, Terry!"

"Cut it out, kid!" Jim yelled at her.

"You're not listening to me-"

"Michael-"

"Mike-"

Tired of arguing, Mike used his power to throw the Triple-decker Eggo Extravaganzas at the both of them, bits of whipped cream staining their clothing. Both looked appalled at what he did. "Jesus!" the police chief exclaimed, looking at the boy angrily. "SHIT!"

"MICHAEL!" the dirty-blonde-haired woman also exclaimed, looking at the freckled boy as well.

He shot up from his chair and shouted to the both of them, "Friends don't LIE!" He then stormed to his room and slammed the door closed with his power.

Jim kicked the dining room table in frustration, muttering, "Shit!" To Terry, not even an argument with her own daughter could top what just happened now. She never thought raising Michael would be difficult, neither did Hopper...

As if things weren't bad already, thanks to Hopper telling Terry about his pumpkin patch investigation.

---

This morning, Bob was driving Will to school. He liked the guy already, but his story about Mr. Baldo...he had to take that to heart. Maybe, just maybe, if he tells that shadow monster to go away like Bob did to Mr. Baldo when he was young, then the episodes would end...they would end.

That was he needed, for those episodes to end. That would make him so happy.

There was another thing that came across his mind...

Jane.

Since he told her about his episodes, he knew she would be very protective of him. Not that he didn't mind her being protective of him, but he just wanted her to calm down, to be fine again. That was why he was thinking of...

Asking her to the Snow Ball.

It's stupid since they were all probably gonna go there anyway, but it's a special question, just for her. He thought that maybe...well, going there as dates and dancing together would ease both of their nerves. And...

The thought of them really dating made him blush. Could it be possible? Or was it a stupid idea?

Bob had spotted the red on his face, grinning and saying, "Uh oh, I

think I see a blush."

Will became stiff before trying to ease his blush. "Wh-what?"

The man snickered a little, continuing, "The only time I blush like that is when I think of Joyce." The auburn-haired boy only nervously chuckled at that. "Who's the girl?"

He gave him a really nervous stare, saying, "N-no one."

He looked at him with a reassuring face for a bit. "It's okay. I promise not to tell anyone." He mimicked zipping up his lips. "You can trust good ol' Bob, buddy!" He got his eyes back on the road as Will smiled a little. He did like him...so...

"Not even Mom?"

"Not a single thing. I mean, I wouldn't tell MY mom about the girl I had a crush on, so I'll spare ya the embarrassment."

He giggled a little. "Okay..." He took a deep breath, trying not to feel so nervous about telling Bob this. "You remember Jane, right?"

"Oh yeah. Terry's youngest girl, right? The cute tomboy?" He nodded at him, making him grin again. "She's the girl?"

The boy looked out the window. "Yeah...she's just so cool and sweet and..."

"Cute?"

"Cute. She's been a really good friend to me and I just..."

Bob chuckled a little. "I know how you feel, bud. I liked your mom for the same reasons too. I'm a lucky man for having her in my life."

Then came the question. Will looked at him once again and asked, "How did you confess to Mom?"

"Whooo..." the man breathed out. "Well, I prepared myself to ask her out."

"How?"

"First, I take a few deep breaths so I won't hyperventilate when I ask your mom the question." Will nodded once again. "Then, I think about the perfect time to ask. I didn't want to ask her during work, so I thought if she was off-the-clock, it'd be just perfect." Take a few deep breaths...think of a good time... "Next, I think about a place to do it. This MIGHT be just me, but I don't like to confess to her when there are people." To be honest, Will didn't want an audience for his question either. "That's why I took your mom to the side of the store." So, somewhere alone, by themselves... "Finally, I talk to her about how wonderful she is before finally asking her the question. I mean, it's easier said than done, but if you just pull through with it, it all becomes worth it in the end." Tell her about how wonderful she was and then finally ask the question... "That was how I confessed to your mom, bud. Maybe you should do that with Jane."

That sounded like a plan to him. "I will. Thanks, Bob."

"Oh, don't mention it." He looked at him with his supportive smile. "You need any advice on anything, don't be afraid to talk to me."

He smiled back at him and replied, "Okay." That was twice Bob gave him good advice he'd follow through. It's been a while since he had a good morning like this.

---

Later in the middle school, during a lecture on the American Crowbar Case, Dustin suddenly barged in, being all fidgety. "I am SO sorry, Mr. Clarke!" he said to the teacher, arriving at his desk and putting his backpack down. "I'm really sorry. Please continue with the class." And so Mr. Clarke did. The curly-haired boy gestured his friends to listen closely to him, all of them leaning in to hear him. "We all have to meet, and I mean, we ALL have to meet, at lunch in the AV Club."

The three other kids looked curious. "Why?" Jane asked in a whisper. She wore a black T-shirt with a white long-sleeve under it, baggy jeans, and red and white sneakers.

"I have something that you won't BELIEVE." They all nodded and put their attention to class. Dustin did look sincere when he said that.

Jane wondered what it could be, along with the other kids.

Will looked at Jane for a bit. Even though he had to focus on the lecture, he had to think about putting Bob's relationship advice in action. Perfect time, perfect place...oh yeah, remembering to breath just a few times before doing anything else...

When the tomboy looked at him, he looked right back at Mr. Clarke, trying not to look suspicious. She thought she saw him looking at her from the corner of her eye...but maybe it was just her.

---

Back in the cabin, Terry flipped through TV channels, looking and feeling more tired than she should. She thought the coffee would kick up the energy she needed for the day, but she guessed it didn't now? Besides, nothing interesting was on. Oh, and she only slept for 4 hours.

Mike was still in his room and hasn't gotten out. She knew that he was probably still in a huff after what happened. He was just a kid...a stubborn and rather irresponsible one, but still a kid...a kid in love. She let out a heavy sigh and turned off the TV. She had tried to talk to him before, but he wouldn't answer or even open the door. Perhaps he just needed space. She could give him that.

She fully laid on the couch, yawning. She really was tired. She hadn't felt this way since she quit her job at Hawkins Lab. Why now? She felt more sleepy that she didn't care at the moment. Perhaps a short nap would be harmless, then she'll wake up and try to talk to him again.

That sounded like a plan to her, so she closed her eyes and began to sleep on the couch.

...

In his room, Mike continued looking at the ceiling, thinking of Jane. Terry and Jim never really understood his feelings anyway, the way she treated him surprising him. She was the only good person in that...Lab, and now she doesn't want him to see her own daughter. If she WAS a good mother, she would.

Maybe he should visit her in the darkness, so he grabbed the blindfold and wrapped it around his eyes, trying to drown out his senses and try to see her again. Feeling frustrated that it wasn't working, he pulled it off and sighed. He didn't want to visit her that way one more time...

He just wanted to see her in real life.

Actually...he will. And Terry won't stop him, no matter what.

Since he heard the TV shut off, he wondered what she was doing. He got off of his bed and slowly opened the door. He didn't see Terry sit up on the couch, so he slowly crept around it to see her sleeping. He crouched down, surprised to see her really sleeping. It was morning, so that was weird...

But he was thankful for it because it meant he wouldn't do anything to stop her from preventing his leave.

He stood back up and walked to the locked door, staring at it for a bit as he slipped on his sneakers...

---

*Hopper, Terry, and Mike arrived at an old cabin, the man kicking the snow off his shoes and the boy doing the same. The woman scoffed. "Why do you men always do that?" she asked before kicking the snow off of her snow boots on the floor of the porch. Hopper just chuckled while Mike looked a bit puzzled at what she said. When she finally got in, she closed the door and looked around with the freckled boy. Everything was dusty and unkept for probably many decades. "This is the place?"*

*"Yup," the man answered plainly. He then told the both of them, "My grandpa used to live here a long time ago."*

*"I bet."*

*He chuckled again. "Mainly, I use it for storage. There's a lotta history here." He grabbed a box that said "Sara" and placed it somewhere in hiding. "So, uh...what do you guys think? It's a work-in-progress. Maybe it's something you'd get used to once we fix it up."*

*Terry giggled a little. "You know, my grandparents actually lived a cabin*



*like this in retirement."*

*Hopper actually looked surprised. "Really?"*

*"Yeah. Except it was warm, and comfy-looking, and definitely well-kept." The police chief scoffed. "But, if we did tidy this up, it could definitely be like that cabin."*

*"Okay, good. I thought you were insulting me for a second there."*

*She laughed. "Wouldn't dream of it." She then looked down at the telekinetic boy. "What do you think, Michael?" Honestly, he didn't get it.*

*"Once we do fix this up, buddy, it'll look more nice than it is now."*

*"Exactly." Both of the adults gave him a smile.*

*"This will be your new home."*

*Home...*

*He looked at the two with wide eyes. That word...this place...it could be... "Home."*

*...*

*Hopper looked through the record cases stored in a box before pulling one out. He looked at Mike in particular, who was leaning against a ladder, and told him, "Now this, bud, THIS is music."*

*He was curious, though Terry, who was near the man, felt more curious. "What? What is it, Hopper?" she asked him.*

*"You'll see." He got the record out of its case and placed it into an old record player. He placed the needle onto it and it began playing "You Don't Mess Around With Jim" by Jim Croce. He began to snap his fingers and...dance? He was smiling, making Mike smile too even though his dance looked pretty weird to him. Terry began laughing at him.*

*"God, Hopper..." Suddenly, he took her hands and tried to make her dance with him. "What the-Hopper!"*

*"Come on, Terry. You should have some fun once in a while."*

*She looked appalled at him trying to make her dance to a song like this, the freckled boy snickering at the sight of this. "I didn't go to prom for no reason!" She then got out of his grip and stepped away from him.*

*He stopped dancing, though he didn't with smiling. "Your loss." She scoffed, though to be honest with herself...she liked the sentiment.*

*Mike stopped snickering as Hopper clapped his hands and announced, "Alright! Let's get to work."*

*And so they were onto cleaning and neatening up the cabin.*

...

*Mike had gotten into a bedroom and removed the blanket, covering his mouth and coughing as the dust came through.*

...

*He then began sweeping the dust and other icky stuff off of the cabin floor while the adults began to pick up boxes and put them down.*

...

*Hopper removed a cover from a window while Terry used a duster to dust some shelves, lamps, and hard-to-reach places.*

...

*Terry had gestured Mike to give her his broom, so he did. She then showed him how to properly sweep the floor.*

...

*Hopper kept removing covers and Terry kept dusting whatever needed to be dusted.*

...

*The police chief was now screwing in the locks for the door, that being his idea and Terry's for safety reasons.*

...

*Mike nodded and understood how he was supposed to sweep the floor, so the dirty-blond-haired woman gave him back the broom and he began sweeping the floor the way she did it. She was so proud of him.*

...

*He sat on the bed and bounced on it a little, smiling. This felt comfortable and he liked the room in general. Maybe he should keep it.*

...

*The two adults began teaching the telekinetic boy how to interpret Morse Code and how to send messages using it. Hopper pressed the button on the extension of Morse Code machine a few time before handing it to Mike. He pressed it a few times like the man did before looking at the Morse Code chart to see what letter he just did.*

...

*Terry and Hopper got groceries and began putting each of them in their respective place. Mike was trying to solve a 108-piece puzzle, occasionally looking at the two of them working. The two looked back at Mike focusing on the puzzle as the woman got out a box of Eggos. She handed it to the man and placed them in a more secret compartment, the two smiling at each other like they were partners-in-crime. Not that they weren't...*

...

*Mike pressed the button to make the beeps again, doing them well and making the two adults happy. He smiled at their happiness.*

...

*As he continued solving the puzzle, he saw Hopper carry in a TV on a stand. Terry got the antennae and placed them on top of it, spreading them apart.*

...

*The police chief and the former Lab employee drilled in a hole on their*

*respective mousetrap, blowing the wood curls away and placing a bullet in those holes.*

*...*

*Outside, the three of them had set up a wire-trap between two trees, Hopper pulling the wire to the second tree with Mike following him, holding a pair of pliers. When they reached to Terry, she asked the boy, "Hand me those, Michael." He did so, the woman cutting the end of the wire with the man holding it.*

*"Now this, bud, is a trip-wire," Hopper told Mike as Terry tied the end of the wire to the nailed-in mousetrap. "It's like an alarm."*

*He looked a little puzzled. "Alarm?"*

*"Alarms make loud noise," Terry replied to him. "It's supposed to get your attention."*

*"Right. You set up the trap like how Terry's doing it."*

*When she finally tied the end to the mousetrap, she stood up and added, "With something like this, if anybody trips over this, it'll make the loud sound."*

*"Like gunfire. Bang!" He grabbed the boy's shoulders when he said that, startling him before chuckling and getting a disapproving glare from Terry.*

*She rubbed the top of the boy's head and stated, "Those 'bad men', they won't find you here."*

*"Yeah." Hopper's face turned serious. "Especially not all the way out here."*

*"We have to take some precautions though."*

*"That's right. Terry and I made up a couple of ground rules we all have to follow." Mike understood, wondering what they were.*

*...*

*Now inside, Hopper placed a piece of paper in front of the boy and said, "Rule Number One: Always keep the curtains drawn."*

---

The boy slowly opened up the curtains, pulled up the blind, and looked around to see if no one else was around, whether that'd be Hopper or anyone else. Everything seemed to be clear.

---

*"Rule Number Two," Terry began to say. "Only open the door if you hear this knock." Both her and Hopper demonstrated their special knock in-sync. "We'll both do that, so you won't have to worry about remembering a different pattern."*

---

Screw that now.

Mike used his power to unlock every lock on the door and open it up. As he got onto the porch, he closed it behind him, taking in the fresh morning air.

---

*"And Rule Number Three," Hopper said. "Don't you ever go out alone, especially in the daylight."*

*"Yes," Terry added. "You will be more exposed if you go out during the day and being more exposed will lead to danger." More danger...he didn't want that...*

---

But now, he was willing to risk it.

He opened the curtains, opened the door without one or the other knocking, and exposed himself in bright daylight. He broke all the rules...he just hoped Terry slept enough that she wouldn't notice. What a dumb mother she was, not even letting him see her daughter. He'll only see Jane once and come back...or not, depending on her.

He walked on the path that would lead to the road, seeing the trap in front of him.

---

*"It's just three simple rules," Terry continued. "Even a little child can understand them."*

*"We'll call them the, uh..." Hopper said. "The 'Don't Be Stupid' rules."*

*The dirty-blonde-haired woman chuckled at that, but stated, "Right, only someone stupid would break them. And we're not stupid, right?"*

*Right, he's...*

---

"Not stupid," he muttered before stepping over the wire-trap and continuing his path to see her...

To see Jane, after all this time.

---

**I'll be stopping here. How was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**I hope I wrote the scene with Terry explaining what love is to Mike well. Now she knows...**

**I also hope I wrote the scene where Bob gives Will some confession advice well. I can see him doing this in canon (if he didn't...well...you know... T\_T), so I decided to add this in here. Plus...I needed to start some build-up to a certain scene...**

**Review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

**\*EDIT OF 8/20/18: I decided to add the flashback sequence and his leave after all because I realize it'd throw off the pacing of future chapters. Hope you guys don't mind that!\***

## 31. Where Is School?

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Billy just couldn't let it go, could he? Goddamn saying he went from a king to a part of a circus act...not to mention that he shoved him and scored one for the skins team.

Jackass.

Steve got back up from the hard gym floor and panted, sweating through his clothes before Kali, wearing a white sweater, a tan skirt, socks, and flats, appeared right in the gymnasium because...well...

He looked and saw her there, being surprised. She gestured him to have him follow her. He thought that maybe she wanted to talk about...

...

Outside at the side of the gym building, Kali asked, "Did I...do anything weird last night?"

He gave her a puzzled look and replied, "What're you talking about?"

She sighed. "Listen, all I remember from Tina's party was going there, drinking...spilling the drink and going to the bathroom..." She shook her head. "Then my mum waking me up in my own bed this morning." She scoffed. "I never would've made it home."

He nodded. "Well, right, I drove you there because you passed out."

"Is that all what happened?"

Like an idiot without a filter, he replied, "No." He mentally cursed himself for saying that.

Now Kali was getting worried. "Then what happened?"

"Are people spreading rumors?"

She sighed again, looking at the ground. "Everyone's been giving me this weird stare this morning. It was like after..." She trailed off, not wanting to say the night they had sex while Barbara died in the Upside Down.

He figured what she was saying before telling her, "I'll find out if there're any rumors, okay? You just ignore any...I dunno, stares or remarks, alright?"

She will as well, it wasn't like she was going to sit there and do nothing. Still... "Okay, but really, what else happened before I passed out?" If she wanted to dispel these stupid rumors, if there are, she had to know.

He looked away from her, removing the towel from his neck and muttering almost inaudibly, "Damn it..." How was he going to explain her breakdown to her?

Now that mutter made her concerned. "What did you say?"

"Nothing."

She knew that was bullshit. "Steve-"

Suddenly, one of the shirts players came out, seeing them and yelling, "C'mon, Harrington! We need you, man! That douchebag is killing us!"

He faced him and yelled, "Alright!"

"Let's GO!"

He faced his girlfriend again and said kindly, "I'll figure out if there's any rumors, okay, Kal? We'll talk later." Before she could speak, he bent down and kissed her cheek before running back into the gym with his fellow shirts teammate. He was almost thankful that he didn't tell her about her breakdown now...but also a little guilty.

She looked at him go with an appalled look on her face. He treated her like she was a kid now. What the hell was that? Why couldn't he tell her about what she did last night?!

---



In the AV Club room, Dustin got out his handmade ghost trap and opened it up. All the kids, including Max who he invited after telling his friends to come, looked down into it and saw a small, green creature with a tail crawling around in it and making growly, squelching sounds, all of them curious about what the hell it was. "His name is d'Artagnan," the curly-haired boy stated as he scooped it up and looked at it like it was a cute pet. "Isn't he cute?"

Jane looked puzzled. "You named him d'Artagnan?" she asked him, confused about the name.

"Yeah, Dart for short."

Max looked a bit disgusted. "And he was in your trash?"

He looked up at her with lit-up eyes. "Scavenging for food. You wanna hold him?"

The red-haired girl immediately shook her head. "No, no-"

Despite her protests, he came to her and tried to hand Dart to her. "He doesn't bite."

"I don't want to-" Suddenly, now the creature was in her hands, causing her to tense up and look disgusted. "Oh my God, he's so slimy!" She then handed him to Lucas, who got the same reaction as her.

"Ugh, he feels like a living booger!" he exclaimed before handing him to Will now, getting the reaction the other two did.

"Oh my God, gross..." he muttered before finally handing him to Jane.

She did get that same reaction, exclaiming, "Ew!" However, she got used to holding him quickly, kept him on her hand, and looked closely at him. She never saw a creature like this before, neither did everyone else. "What IS this thing?"

"My question exactly," Dustin replied to her. None of the other kids felt reassured that he didn't know what Dart was...so why bring him here?

...

He placed a bunch of nonfictional library books on the table and said, "Okay, so at first, I thought he was some kind of polliwog."

Max looked confused. "Polliwog?"

"It's a fancy word for tadpole," Lucas replied to her.

"Which is the larval stage of a toad-"

She gestured him to stop. "I know what a tadpole is."

He grabbed one of the books and opened it up. "Alright, then you know that most tadpoles are aquatic, right?" He pointed at a specific page to everyone, especially Max. "Dart isn't though, he doesn't need water."

"Yeah, but not all polliwogs live in the water," Lucas stated. Dart continued to move around inside a circle of wires. Jane looked at him, thinking that...well, he was kinda cute for...whatever it was.

"True. There are two terrestrial polliwogs." He got another book and pointed to one specific page. "There's the *Indirana semiplamata*..." He went to another specific page, pointing at that. "And the *Adenomera andreae*." He looked up at everyone. "But, one lives in India and the other in South America. So how did one end up in my trash?"

"Maybe..." Max began, shrugging. "It escaped when some scientists brought it here?" Jane now saw that Dart's lower sides...were moving, making her have a weird look.

"Uh, guys, I think something's moving in him," she told everyone. They all focused on him, the curly-haired girl pulling the lamp down a little for a closer look. However, it screamed at that, everyone almost jumping back at it. The "polliwog" ran away from the light with its two legs to the edge of the table. Dustin gasped and caught him with his hand when he began to fall off the edge.

"Whoa, buddy..." he whispered to him, patting his head with his finger. "It's okay...it's okay..." He smiled at him. "I gotcha, little guy. I know you don't like that, but it's okay." Dart gave him a...coo(?),

weirding everyone out. However, Will suddenly felt...cold and scared seeing him now.

Dustin looked up at everyone and continued, "There's the other thing. Reptiles are cold-blooded, ectothermic. They love heat, they love the sun, but Dart doesn't. He HATES it because it hurts him." That feeling Will had grew stronger. It doesn't like the heat...

"Soooo, if he's not a polliwog or a reptile..." the black-haired boy said in concern.

"Then I discovered a brand new species," Dustin replied to him, smiling and petting Dart. Well, he certainly didn't lack of proudness now, did he?

Will didn't like this though...he remembered on Christmas last year...he coughed something up...it felt like what Dart did, but inside his body...he realized what Dart could be in complete horror.

The bell rang and that made everyone scramble to get their stuff and go to class. Most of them, with the exception of Will at the second, got out of the room. He fell back behind everyone, the thought of Dart being the dangerous he coughed into the sink last year...no one should be near it...

---

During lunch, Kali and Steve usually would eat together in his car, but he wasn't anywhere to be seen...much to her frustration. She sighed and spotted Jonathan eating at his car, thinking she should eat with him instead. She walked and finally approached him, greeting, "Hey."

He looked at her and greeted back, "Hey."

"I couldn't find Steve anywhere, so can I eat lunch with you?"

He nodded. "Go ahead." She smiled at him and sat on the hood of the car with him, setting her lunch bag down. However, hearing that made him worry about what he was hearing today. "So, I'm sorry to ask this right off the bat, but..." He looked at her, being concerned. "Have you heard anything about...me? Or Steve or..."

He got what she was trying to ask, answering, "Yeah, I heard a rumor about you two." He took a bite of his P.B.J. and swallowed it.

That made her muscles tense up, but then she got the courage to ask, "What is it?"

He sighed, looking off at the distance. "People are saying that Steve..." He trailed off, not wanting to say it because it sounded awful.

"He...what?"

He had to let out, she had to know that he knew. "That he slept with you in the bathroom while you were still drunk."

Her eyes widened at that. "What?"

So she didn't know? That was actually surprising. "That's what I kept hearing from some people."

She wrapped her arms around herself, feeling so...sick hearing that. She looked at him again and asked, "You were in the party too, right?" He just nodded at her. "Is that true?"

The fact that she didn't know what happened in the bathroom surprised him again. She was drunk, but... "I don't know. I just saw you storm off to the bathroom and Steve was following you. Then after 10 minutes, he was carrying you away from the party and drove off with you, probably taking you back home." She took a bottle of juice she had, opened it up, and took a sip. That would explain why she woke up in her bed. Still... "Did Steve not tell you?"

She shook her head, his eyes enlarging. "No. When I asked, he just avoided it." That didn't sound at all to him.

"Why?"

She shrugged, looking scared. "I don't know." She sighed, shaking her head. "That can't be true. Steve isn't like that, not anymore." Jonathan had to agree. They both knew he wasn't the self-righteous douchebag he was since middle school.

"The people I heard the rumor from looked like douchebags anyway." He took a sip of his drink as she did with her juice.

Despite this, she was feeling...guilty for getting drunk in the first place. "God, I never drank before and I can't remember a thing."

Jonathan frowned. "Well, that's happens when you drink too much alcohol. It messes with your brain, your memory."

"I know that, but..." She shook her head. "I guess I just wanted to escape this...this feeling that I've been having. I just...hate pretending that everything is fine because I know it's not." He kept frowning, but he nodded in understanding. "I feel still feel guilty for last year...for having that argument with Barb before her death..." Her heart felt like it was dropping by the thought of it. "She didn't deserve it."

He felt bad for hearing that, wanting to cheer her up. "Listen, Kali. At least that thing is dead."

She nodded. "Yeah, but it didn't help. It's like I have this..."

He figured out what she was saying. "This heavy weight around your shoulders?" She frowned and nodded at him again. "Yeah...I've been feeling that too."

"But it's different. Will is alive, he came home."

"Right, he is and he did, but..." He shook his head. "He's not the same as he was before, y'know? I tried to be there for him, try to help him, but..." He sighed, shrugging a little. "I dunno. Maybe..." He looked her straight in the eye. "Maybe things can't go back to the way they were." As much as she hated to admit it, she knew he was right. Nothing could go back to the way it was...but...

"That makes me mad." She pointed at him for a bit. "Doesn't it make you mad?"

He looked a little perplexed. "Mad?"

"Yeah, doesn't it just make you mad that those bastards responsible for everything last year just get away with it? They get away with ruining peoples' lives and get off scot-free?"

He sighed again. "The bastards responsible for this are dead."

She shot him a glare. "Do you really believe that, Jonathan? Do you?" He made a thin line with his lips, not responding to that and looking away. As if Kali wasn't upset enough today, now she was thinking of-

A sudden blast of rock music caught both of their attention, seeing a guy with a walkman play it as he ate some Goldfish. That suddenly made an idea pop up in the Indian girl's head. After thinking about it...she might do it, but she needed help. "Your mum's boyfriend works at RadioShack, right?" she asked the auburn-haired guy, the two looking at each other.

"Yeah," he answered. "Why? What're you thinking?"

She looked at his car, then looked back at him. "Do you wanna skip fourth period?"

He would, but... "What about Steve?"

Steve...right now, he wasn't her first priority and...she didn't want to pull him into this. He's had enough. "I don't want him to be involved." That made him concerned. Why didn't she want him to be involved? What was her plan?

---

Getting out of the woods after such a long time, Mike heard a woman cooing, "Isn't this fun~?" He heard laughing from her and a little girl. He walked a little closer and saw a mother pushing her daughter up and down a swing set. They both seemed to be enjoying it. He continued looking at them, wanting to feel happy too...

---

*One night, Hopper and Terry were reading this book to Mike in bed called "Anne of Green Gables" because it was the only book Terry had to offer. Hopper didn't mind it though. Terry read, "I would feel so sad if I was a disappointment to her because she didn't live long after that, you see. She died of a fever when I was just three months old. I do wish she'd lived long enough for me to remember calling her mother. I think it would be sweet to call her mother."*

*That quote made the freckled boy think of something and ask them, "Do I have a mother?"*

*They both looked up at him, Hopper answering, "Yeah, of course you have a mother, bud. No one's born without one." The dirty-blond-haired woman drew her lips into a line though.*

*"Then where is she?" The adults felt their blood run cold at that, looking at each other and exchanging glances. Through those glances, they both decided that Terry was going to tell him, so they both looked at him with solemn faces.*

*"She...she's gone," she told him. "She's not around anymore." The heartbreak seen on his face made them both feel terrible, Terry feeling that the most.*

*"She's gone?"*

*They both nodded. "Yeah...I'm sorry."*

*"We both are, kid," Hopper added. His eyes began to water, now looking like he was about to cry. Terry felt the most terrible again and gave him a warm hug.*

*"Hey, hey..." she whispered to him. "It's alright. It happens." He didn't hug back, but appreciated it anyway.*

*When she stopped hugging, she went back to Hopper and looked down at the book, continuing to read, "And father died four days afterwards from fever too." The boy wiped the tears that came out away, feeling completely awful about his mother. "That left me an orphan and folks were at their wits' end, so Mrs. Thomas said to me, 'What to do with me?' You see, no one wanted me even then. It seems to be my fate." Mike felt more awful that he could relate to what this "Anne" was saying...until he escaped, but...*

---

*He deeply sighed, looking at the leaf-littered ground. His mother...gone. He had Terry, but...she was not that good, if he were being honest to himself.*

*"Is your mom here?" he could faintly hear the woman ask.*

Wait.

"Sweetie?" He looked at the woman holding her young daughter's hand, looking worried.

He needed to ask her the question. "Where is...school?"

"The school?" The mother pointed to her left. "It's just a mile that way." He looked that way and nodded before walking away. "Hey, wait!" He didn't reply, but stopped and looked back at her. "Where are your parents?"

He had no parents.

Finding her annoying, he looked at the swing and made it loop over the bar, making the daughter say, "Look, Mommy, look." When she did, he began to leave and got out of their sights. Just more time...and he'll find Jane.

---

*When Terry and Hopper were done reading "Anne of Green Gables" to Mike and tucked him in, they both sat on the couch and began talking to each other. "So...I'm surprised you got this book," Hopper told her.*

*She scoffed and grinned, her mind forgetting about Mike's question for a moment, before answering, "Why? I loved that book when I was younger."*

*"You did?"*

*"I didn't always read what I need to study, if that's what you're asking." He chuckled. "I just found it in the library during middle school. I kept checking it out because I enjoyed reading it. I loved Anne, she reminded me of my sister."*

*The police chief chuckled again. "Won't argue with that, seeing how she is." So he did know why without any further implications. That was good.*

*"What about you?"*

*He sighed a little. "Well...I always read this to my daughter every night before she went to bed. She'd enjoy it." The smile she had disappeared, remembering what he had told her about his daughter one time while they*



were trying to lure out Michael. "Dunno if Mike does."

She shrugged. "Maybe he does. It's an enjoyable story, though it's not always sunshines and rainbows."

He nodded. "Right..."

She frowned at the solemn look on his face, shifting herself closer to him. "Hopper, I'm sorry about Sara." He didn't reply, but she kept going, "Nobody deserves to lose their child like that. I would know...I worked with people who'd kidnapped children and...some of them wouldn't make it." She deeply sighed, feeling a pang of guilt for even working with Brenner and Wheeler. "I'm sorry I keep bringing that up, but-"

He shook his head. "No, I get what you're trying to say." He gave her a sad yet reassuring smile. "Thanks." She smiled back at him, nodding a little. There was silence between them for a bit, the two staring into each other's eyes and feeling...something. Then he suddenly asked, "So how did you get married to Brenner in the first place?"

She scoffed again, looking away from him and shaking her head. "Oh my God...it's so stupid how I first thought of him," she answered.

Hopper looked really amused and asked, "Oh really?"

"You wouldn't believe." He raised an eyebrow at her, now making her want to tell the entire story. "In college, I was observed by a couple scientists from Hawkins Lab because they heard about me and my academic achievements. When I graduated, I was greeted by Martin and I thought..." She sighed again, grinning nervously and shaking her head. "I thought he was handsome." That caused Hopper to laugh. She got flustered and shushed him. "Mike's sleeping!" she whisper-shouted at him, pointing at the door.

"Right, sorry..." he whispered back before getting himself back together. "Go on."

She took a deep breath and continued, "He told me what the two other scientists told me and offered me a job there, then I took it. I worked there and whenever I got the chance, I would talk to him. He'd compliment my ability with talking to the subjects and say I did some good work. He had

this..." It hurt her to say it, but... "He had this kindness to him and this charisma that I just couldn't resist." The man nodded, looking serious as she did. "One day, he...just proposed marriage to me. Like a love-struck idiot, I accepted and we got married half a year after. My parents liked him, but Becky always felt skeptical about him, for good reason as I realized later on. The more time we spent together, the less it felt like I was happy with him. That kindness he had rarely occurred and his charisma wore its effect on me with time. I felt like I was trapped because I wanted to be away from him, because he wasn't what I thought he was, but I didn't want to disappoint my parents, so I didn't suggest that we break off the marriage."

"Then you discovered what he and Wheeler were really doing."

She nodded. "Our relationship got worse when I discovered that. I finally told him that I wanted to quit and also a divorce. He arranged those and we met one night to discuss the promise. It's basically, if I keep quiet about what happens in the Labs, he, Wheeler, and the lab personnel would let me live a peaceful life with my daughters. I agreed to that and we finally separated."

The man frowned at that, asking, "How did you feel after?"

"I felt two things: relief and guilt. Relief because I was finally broken off of my marriage to him and my daughters wouldn't have to go through seeing us ignore each other or argue anymore. Guilt because I left many subjects behind..." She paused to look back at Mike's room. "Including Michael...and I had to keep silent about their suffering if I wanted to divorce and quit." She deeply sighed, leaning back against the couch and looking up at the ceiling. "At least Dr. Owens won't be doing shit like that anymore."

"Right." He wanted to cheer her up, so he placed a gentle hand on her shoulder. "It's not your fault. He's a calculating son of a bitch."

She scoffed once again, replying with, "He was. I don't think he ever loved me, I think he just wanted me to have Jane for..."

"The experiments."

She nodded again. "Yeah, damn him." She did spend some time around

chemicals, so it was possible he thought Jane would be alright for experiments. "I'm glad he and Wheeler are dead."

"Me too, sons of bitches."

She smiled, feeling rather warm about talking to Hopper like this. She looked at him and stated, "I don't think I ever told anybody about my relationship with Martin like this, not even Becky or Joyce. You're one of a kind, Hopper."

He smiled at her. "Y'know, you can just call me Jim."

She raised an eyebrow. "Really?"

He nodded. "Really."

She smiled at him. "Okay...Jim." To be honest with herself, he was...genuinely charming. It wasn't fake like Brenner's though...it was sincere. She never thought that would come a guy who was a complete playboy back in high school. It was a nice change. "What about you? You and your wife divorced after...Sara, didn't you?"

He frowned again, but answered, "Yeah. Diane and I weren't exactly coping with her death well, yelling and arguing every day, so we just ended it."

Now she placed a hand on his shoulder. "Jim..."

He looked away from her for a bit. "Don't worry. It's all in the past anyway."

"But it affects you, I can tell. You have this carefree attitude, you used to live alone, you don't talk about yourself a lot..." She did mention to him that she majored in Psychology at one point, so he couldn't say her observation was bullshit. "You can't tell me that doesn't affect you anymore, Jim, because I know it does."

Damn, she was so much different from other women, being able to read him like that. He pretty much felt like shit since she called him out for his behavior, saying, "Sorry, I just..."

"No, it's okay. It's something personal. Most people don't freely share their

*personal experiences with others."*

*He smiled a little, looking back at her. "You know a lot."*

*She smiled back at him again. "Didn't I tell you I-"*

*"Majored in Psychology?"*

*"...yeah."*

*"Just saying." To be honest with himself, Terry was always a bit pretty, but she also got brains. A woman more intelligent than he'll ever be can be beautiful. She was also kind and easy-going even. He was surprised she was the same shy and nerdy girl he went to high school with.*

*Suddenly, he bluntly asked, "How come you never got a date?"*

*She blushed at the question, feeling like she was a teenager again as she nervously smiled at that. "What kind of question is that? After all we talked about, you ask me THAT?"*

*He chuckled again, knowing how stupid that question was. "Sorry, just wanted to lighten the mood."*

*Well...it was...kind of. It's a less depressing subject to talk about. "After him, I didn't want to be with anyone else for a while. Even so, I got my daughters and I got my...job. I was getting too busy to even think about being with anyone else."*

*He understood, but then stated, "No guy approached you and...asked the question?"*

*She shook her head, keeping her nervous smile. "No. A few guys did look at me like they wanted me, but I made sure it was clear to them that I wasn't interested."*

*He looked a little amused. "Oh, alright, 'cause I was gonna say, what guy would ignore the beauty you have?"*

*She gasped at that, looking at him with wide eyes and feeling her face heat up more. "Jim!" she exclaimed before he shushed her and pointed to Mike's room. She sighed and said, "Sorry." She felt her heart suddenly*

thump at that. "But Jesus Christ, have you NOT grown up?"

He grinned. "Whaaat? I'm just stating a fact."

Honestly, she thought her beauty was disappearing with age. It was the only reason why she got a job as a waitress in Hideaway. She decided to go back at him by saying, "You still don't look that bad either."

He was actually surprised that she said that. He personally didn't give a damn about how he looked, but to hear a woman, THIS woman in particular, compliment him about it... "Really?"

She nodded. "Even with the beard, you still look pretty handsome."

He felt himself blush like a girl he would spend the night with and said, "Well, thanks. Never thought you would find me handsome."

"It was only a passing thought back in high school."

"But it's not now."

She hated to admit it, but he was completely right.

They stopped talking and continued looking at each other...with strong feelings for one another. Slowly, they got closer to each other, leaned their faces close to each other...

And kissed each other.

Terry had never really kissed before, but despite Jim's facial hair...she liked his kiss. It was no wonder girls liked him back then. Jim, while being no stranger to kissing, felt different this time. He'd usually kiss a girl out of obligation or to initiate foreplay. This...was this how it felt like to kiss out of...love?

The dirty-blond-haired woman had kissed him again, putting on her hand on his cheek and feeling his beard. He kissed her back as he began to lean himself towards her. However, she suddenly broke the kiss, stopping him from advancing. "Jim?"

"Yeah?" he replied casually.

*She broke the kiss because...she thought of something. "I don't know about this...about us."*

*His lips got thin, but he understood, straightening up and allowing her some space. "Sorry."*

*She shook her head. "Don't be. I just..." She took a deep breath.*

*"You wanna think about it?"*

*She nodded. "Yeah. Is that..."*

*He shook his head. "I understand. Take your time. There's no rush."*

*"Are you sure?" He nodded at her, making her nod back. She was glad he was understanding.*

*She looked back at the clock and saw that it was close to midnight, making her stand up and walk to get her things. "Well, I'll be going. I'll see you and Mike tomorrow...Jim."*

*He gave her a warm smile, saying, "I'll be waiting until then." She smiled back at him and left. When she did, Jim released a sigh and got up to grab the blanket and pillow he uses to sleep on the couch. After getting closer and fonder of Terry, he guessed he just couldn't hold back anymore. She probably felt the same since they kissed. Still, it was sudden and Terry had a right to think it over for as long as she liked. He hoped it wasn't TOO long though...*

*As she got into her car and drove away, she reminisced about that moment. She couldn't really believe what happened. She and Jim just kissed! God, was she feeling young again, but she never kissed before, so that reaction was probably inevitable. She had grown more closer to him...and more fond. That moment was just a...a release of her growing feelings. She would actually be with Jim...but there was their situation: taking care of Michael and keeping him a secret from everyone they know...including Jane. That was why she needed time to think about them over. Because when-no, IF they got found out by someone close to either of them...*

---

The dirty-blonde-haired woman shot her eyes open, shocked that she

dreamed of that memory. Since it was brought up recently, she guessed it was unavoi-

She suddenly spotted that the curtains were left open, much to her shock. She didn't leave those open, did she? She got off of the couch and went to the window, closing the blind and the curtains. She decided to look at the locks on the door, just to be safe, and did so...seeing that they were all unlocked. She gasped at that because she KNEW she locked it. Could this mean...?

She looked back, calling out, "Mike?" There was no answer, as expected since there was the incident at breakfast. She walked to his room, shouting, "Michael?" She opened the door...and didn't see him there. Her jaw dropped. So she was right...

He got out while she slept.

She slammed the door shut, muttering, "Damn it!" Now she felt awful for taking a nap because that made the perfect escape for him. She stormed out of the cabin with her coat, closing the door behind her and grabbing the keys out of the pocket of her coat. She slipped on her coat and got into her car, starting the engine. When it did, she began thinking of where he could be. If he wanted to escape, it would be because of Jane, she knew it...

Jane was at school right now.

That was a big red target for the Lab.

"Shit!" She finally did a three-point turn and drove out of the woods to go to the school and stop him before anyone could see him.

---

**Stopping right here. Poor Terry...how's this chapter though? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**Yeah, Steve's not going to join Kali and Jonathan on their own little plot to completely avenge Barb because his bond with Dustin isn't something I wanna break for this story...sorry! But some small things will be different.**

**So...now you guys know what that "night" Hopper and Terry**

kept thinking is now. Should they or should they not be an item...? I mean, since Terry knew about Mike's feelings towards her own daughter...

Anyways, review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!



## 32. Guys, I Found Him

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

The final bell rang in the middle school, kids either going out or getting into their club rooms. As Will closed the locker, Jane waited for him and said, "Come on, Will. We're going to show Mr. Clarke Dart." He didn't look happy though...he actually looked worried, making her look worried as well. "Will?" He slowly walked to her. "What's wrong?"

"It's about d'Artagnan," he told her in a scared voice. That didn't make her worry go away at all. He grabbed her hand and dragged her to the side hallway that was surprisingly empty. "But before I tell you, I need to tell you something else."

She was concerned, asking, "What is it?"

He gulped, taking a deep breath before saying, "Last year on Christmas, when my family was about to eat dinner, I had to...uh...go to the bathroom." She nodded, listening to him. "I stared at the mirror for a bit, feeling like..." He shuddered at remembering the feeling. "Like you know when you get sick and have to cough out phlegm?"

She nodded again. "Yeah."

"That's how I felt...then I coughed something out. I-it looked like..." He gulped. "A black slug." The tomboy's eyes widened at that statement.

"What? You coughed THAT out?!"

He nodded. "Yeah. I, uh, must've got it from being in the Upside Down. I-it got down the drain and...that started my episodes." He paused. "Jane..."

"Yes?"

"I..." He took another deep breath. "I think I coughed out d'Artagnan." She gasped, looking terrified as she covered her mouth. "H-he's got

the same yellow streak a-and...the noises I told you about yesterday...he was making the same sound." That just made her more aghast. "I don't think he's a harmless animal, since those eggs came from the Upside Down." There was no doubt about that...in fact, some things could be explained...

"Oh my God..." And everyone else was going to show him to Mr. Clarke...God, what COULD it do?! She then exclaimed, "Come on, we need to stop them before it's too late!" He nodded as they both ran to the way to Mr. Clarke's room as fast as they could.

When they reached to his room, Jane opened the door and charged inside with Will, the teacher as well as their friend's looking at her weird. "Stop!" She looked at the teacher and snatched the trap away from him. "S-sorry, Mr. Clarke! Dustin was gonna pull a mean prank on you! I told him not to do it so many times!"

The curly-haired boy looked at her in utter disbelief and exclaimed, "What the hell are you doing?!"

She looked at him with terrified eyes. "Come on, we need to go, right now." She began to ran and gestured everyone to follow her. "RIGHT NOW!" The few of them puzzled, they and Will ran out of the room, leaving Mr. Clarke perplexed.

...

While Max was left out of the room because Jane told the boys she had to and pounding on the door, she yelled, "Can I please come in?!"

"No!" Jane shouted back at her, hearing her groan and pound the door once more. She rolled her eyes before, looking at Dustin and Lucas, both of whom were puzzled by what the other two said.

"I don't get it," Lucas stated.

"What don't you get?" she replied with a baffled look.

He tapped his fingers on the table. "Will coughed up something that looked like Dart last year?"

The auburn-haired boy nodded a little. "Yeah...there was no tail

though."

"But he has the same yellow streak," Jane added. "And he heard his growls yesterday. They're the exact same sound."

Dustin looked hurt, asking the shy boy, "Why didn't you tell us this before?"

He shrugged a little. "I wasn't sure."

"Maybe it's a coincidence."

"Or not," the tomboy retorted, looking at her best friend. "What if when Will was stuck in the Upside Down, he got True Sight?"

Lucas looked a little puzzled. "True Sight?"

"It gives you the power to look into the ethereal plane," the curly-haired boy said to him.

He was still confused, moving his hand. "Can you please elaborate?"

Jane sighed. "Maybe these flashbacks Will keeps having aren't really flashbacks. Maybe they're actually real, like Will can SEE into the Upside Down."

Now he was kind of getting it. "So that means that Dart's..."

"From the Upside Down." Dustin sighed heavily, shaking his head.

"We have to take him to Hopper."

She nodded. "Agreed."

"No, no way!" Dustin exclaimed in protest. "We take him to Hopper, then he's as good as dead!" Will looked a little sad hearing that.

She gave him an irritated look and said, "Maybe he SHOULD be dead."

He gave her a disapproving glare. "How can you say that, Jane?!"

"How can you NOT?! He's FROM the Upside Down! It's a terrible

place!"

"True, but that doesn't automatically make HIM terrible!"

That completely baffled her. "That's just like saying that just because someone's from the Death Star that it automatically doesn't make them TERRIBLE!"

He shook his head, looking down at the trap. "We have a bond-"

"Because he likes that crap called nougat?!"

His glare to her became sharp. "NO! It's because he TRUSTS me!"

Lucas looked just as skeptical as she did. "He TRUSTS you?"

He looked at him and nodded. "Yes! I promised that I would take care of him."

The argument stopped when Dart screeched and rattled the trap. Everyone tensed up at that, then stepped away from the table when he kept doing that, becoming cautious now. He tilted the trap forward, causing Jane to instantly grab the microphone to hurt him. Dustin pointed at her and demanded, "Don't you dare hurt him."

"If he attacks, I will," she replied in a biting voice, Will being behind her in horror.

"Just open it, dude!" Lucas demanded the curly-haired boy. Carefully, Dustin grabbed the opener for the trap and pressed it. It threw open, seeing Dart be more bigger and greener, still having the yellow streak he had. He growled, everyone shocked to see him change like this.

"Ho-ly SHIT..." Lucas muttered, Dustin throwing the opener back. They all saw the creature crawl a little and growl more, the tomboy tightening her grip on the mic. It growled more as the things on his sides began to move again, then pop out in puss and blood, turning out to be an extra pair of legs. Everyone shot back, the black-haired boy exclaiming, "OH SHIT!" It roared menacingly, causing Jane to bring the mic down to smash him.

"NO!" Dustin exclaimed as he grabbed her hand and made her miss.

Dart ran and fell off the table, being completely fine. He then ran out and the door, thanks to Max lock-picking it as a desperate means to get inside, opened, letting him run loose now. Even she was shocked at his change.

"Shit!" Jane exclaimed as they all got out of the room, two of the boys tripping down and one falling on Max. All of them looked frantically as the two boys got up. "Where is he?!"

"Was that DART?!" Max asked in utter shock.

She looked at her. "Yeah, and YOU let him escape!"

"Why did you attack him?!" Dustin yelled at her.

She rolled her eyes at him and began to storm after him. "Come on, we need to find him and quick!"

They all did, but Dustin continued to yell at her, "Don't hurt him! DON'T YOU HURT HIM, JANE!" Why wouldn't she? Jeez, Dustin was so attached to that thing like it was a harmless pet or something. It was annoying and REALLY unnecessary right now! He was dangerous and he needed to be stopped before he could do any harm.

---

Arriving at the Ives home, Kali, who was carrying a walkman bought from RadioShack, and Jonathan walked inside, Kali saying, "Weird that that my Mum's not back home." She didn't see her car there, after all.

"She usually is?" the auburn-haired guy asked her as they both went up the stairs.

"Yeah, she's always off work on Thursdays, so she usually goes grocery shopping in the morning, then comes back before I do." She wondered why this wasn't the case today.

"Well, it's not like she's going to stop us if she was here. I mean, there was last year."

Right, she did trust them since things were going on. She would approve of what they were going to do too. "Yeah, I guess." They

finally got into her room, closing the door and the girl sitting on the bed, setting the bag next to her. She then grabbed her phone and punched in the numbers, taking a deep breath.

"Are you sure about this?" Jonathan asked her since he saw her do that.

"Wouldn't be doing this if I wasn't," she replied as she placed the phone to her ear. It's risky, but she knew it could be worth it.

After a little bit, she heard Mrs. Holland greet, *"Hello, this is Marsha speaking."*

"Hey, Mrs. Holland, it's me, Kali."

*"Kali?"*

She took another deep breath to keep herself calm. "I...I need to tell you something...about Barbara, about that night. I...uh...haven't be completely honest with you." She looked up at her friend to see if she was doing alright, him nodding. "But not on the phone. We can meet tomorrow at Forrest Hills Park at nine in the morning. Don't tell anyone else, okay? And don't call me back here, it's too dangerous."

*"Kali...what is this?"* The woman's voice was of concern and shock.

"Please trust me on this, okay? Bye." She then hung up, letting out a deep sigh.

Jonathan nodded at her again. "You did good."

"I hope I did." If this goes wrong in any way...

---

As Terry drove to the school, she heard a police siren ring several feet behind her, making her slow down and drive to the side with the rest of the cars so the vehicle would go through. That made her more worried, making her watch them go so she could follow it.

...

After a bit, she finally arrived where the police car was: a house in a

neighborhood...with one of its swings at the back of it being completely wrapped into the bar it was hung on. She saw the police question a woman and her daughter, it looked like, having no doubt in her mind that Michael was behind this. When she finds him, she swore to God...

She drove away to prevent suspicion and continue her route to the school.

---

As he saw a bus drive away, Mike emerged out of the trees and saw the middle school right before his eyes. He walked towards it, but not before stopping by the bike stands. He spotted Jane's bike, remembering about riding with her fondly. His strong feelings for her washed over him as he held onto the bike's gripping bars. After 353 days...he finally touched her bike again.

"Jane..." he murmured, smiling a little. He let go and then proceeded to go into the school.

---

Inside one hallway, Jane walked through it with a walkie-talkie in her hand, looking around for Dart. She pressed the speaking button on it and said, "East is clear, no sign of Dart." She went up the stairs and muttered, "Where are you, you slimy monster...?" She went forward, still looking for him.

...

In another hallway juxtaposed to the one Jane was going through, Mike stopped and went through a short one connected to the other hallway. He looked to his left, not seeing Jane, before walking to his right. Where was she...?

...

As the tomboy looked into an empty classroom, she heard Dustin say, "*West is clear too. Will?*"

"*South is clear,*" he answered. "*Lucas? Anything?*" She scanned the entire classroom and saw no sign of the creature, so then looked into

another one.

*"Nothing here, man."* She could say the same for this other classroom she looked in.

The gym was near, so she walked to that and opened the door, entering into it. She looked around before hearing the door to the boys' locker room open and swaying back and forth. Holding onto the possibility that Dart did that, she walked towards it and entered inside, trying to get rid of the weird feeling of going in there.

She slowly walked around, looking at every inch for him. She then spotted a mop she could attack him with, so she grabbed it and positioned it like a poking stick as she continued forward. She kept her guard up, but couldn't help but feel nervous about this. If she did...how would he react? She knew she would attack him instantly, but what if...he attacked HER first? She'll make sure to prevent that from happening.

As she finally got into the locker room, she became cautious and took slow and careful steps. She suddenly heard some objects clatter from the other side, making her breath hitch and her stand behind one locker. She took a deep breath...attack him before he attacks her first...she could do it...she could do it.

When the sounds got close, she let out a cry and got out to attack Dart...only to see a puzzled Max instead. "Whoa, what the hell are you doing?" she asked.

Just seeing her made her irritated, making her reply, "What the hell are YOU doing?"

"Looking for Dart."

She groaned and threw down the mop. "I hate this..." she muttered to herself. She risked going into the boys' locker room only to see HER, of all people, in there. What a waste of time.

Max felt a little bad, so she decided to follow her out. "Hey-"

"Go away."



Well, that was quite friendly. "I just wanna help you-"

"I'm fine without your help, now go home."

Jeez... "Dude, you should chill-"

She turned to her and yelled, "Will you shut up?!" She tensed up at that, the curly-haired tomboy turning back and walking away. This girl was getting bitchy for no reason. She was JUST trying to make some conversation.

She continued to follow her, the two getting out of the locker room. "Do you hate me?"

Jane rolled her eyes. "Why does it matter?"

"Uh, because you want me to go away."

"That'd be great, then you wouldn't be bothering me."

Max scoffed. "Dude, come on. It's like you don't want me to be in your party."

"Right."

She said that so plainly that it baffled her. "Why?"

She stopped and turned to her again. "Because you're annoying, okay?! And we don't need another member in our party!" She pointed at herself for a second. "I'm our Paladin, Will is our Cleric, Dustin's our Bard, Lucas is our Ranger, and Mike's our Mage!" She suddenly realized that she dropped his name right in front of a stranger.

The red-haired girl looked puzzled. "Mike? Who's Mike? Does he go here?"

She huffed. "N-no, he...moved away, okay?" She then tried to leave her once again.

However, Max was never the girl to not let up, so she put down her skateboard and began riding it to her. "He was your mage?" Jane didn't answer, but she kept going, "What could he do, like magic

tricks or something?" She still didn't answer, but the red-haired tomboy performed a kick-stop with her skateboard and got in front of her. "Well, I can be your guys' Zoomer."

The curly-haired girl gave her a weird look. "That's not even a real thing."

She had a face of persistence. "But it COULD be." She got on her skateboard again and began to ride around her. "See? Zoomer."

Jane looked unimpressed. "Wow, how mind-blowing..."

Max grinned. "Come on, you HAVE to be impressed." Well, it wasn't like Jane could skateboard anyway.

She kept seeing her go in circles, making her state, "You're just going in circles. Do you even know any tricks?"

She scoffed. "You try it since you probably think it's easy."

She shook her head. "No."

"Why?"

She shrugged. "I...don't know how. I never learned how to skateboard."

She actually looked a little surprised. "Seriously?" She performed a kick-stop again and held her skateboard. "Maybe I can teach you."

She gave her a weird look. "Why would you care to teach me?"

"I just wanna be friends. I never thought I'd meet another girl like me before." Jane didn't reply to that, Max shrugging a little. "I'm just saying, there's no reason to treat me like I'm your enemy or something. I can be nice and a good friend. You just have to treat me like one." Well...she certainly wasn't annoyed by her now. Plus, she was right about the two of them being the same since they were tomboys. Maybe...

She nodded, saying, "Okay, I'll try."

She smiled at her. "Great. Now, let's go find Dart." Jane guessed it wouldn't hurt to have her along after all. She'll give her a chance.

The two left the gym, Max skating. After a couple of minutes, Jane said, "Sorry that I treated you wrong before. It's just..."

"Just what?" Max asked curiously.

She shook her head, wondering if she should tell her that they have crushes on her. She decided not to say that. "I guess it's just that Lucas and Dustin like you more than me."

She raised an eyebrow again. "Really?"

"I mean, they seem to like hanging out with you more and they keep talking about you and stuff." She sighed. "I guess they're just tired of me."

"Hey." She skated around her again, making her stop. "If they're good friends, they'd still like being with you-y'know, despite me."

She guessed she had a point. "I guess."

Suddenly, Will's voice came through the walkie-talkie, saying, "*Guys...I found him.*"

The two girls stopped moving, looking shocked at that statement as they both listen to the walkie-talkie closely. "*Where?*"

*"In the bathroom...by Mr. Salerno's."*

Jane pressed the speaking button and replied, "Copy that. Be right there." She walked forward, seeing that Max wasn't following. She stopped and looked back at her. "You coming?"

"Actually..." Max looked a little embarrassed. "I need to go to the bathroom, but I'll catch up."

She nodded. "Okay. I'll see you later." She nodded back before they both parted ways, Jane running to the bathroom her friend was at.

---

Will, being in the bathroom, looked at Dart, who was near a toilet, and calmly said to him, "I-it's okay...I'm not gonna hurt you...just stay there until everyone else arrives..." He cowered to a corner and screeched at him. That caused him to drop his walkie-talkie and run out. He panted, feeling like he was shaking again. He reminded him of...

He saw the lights began to flicker, making him horrified by this. He didn't want to be in another episode...damn-

"Will?" Jane's voice called out. That caused the flickering to stop as he saw her go up the stairs and to him. "Are you alright?"

He nodded. "Um, yeah. I just..." He pointed at the bathroom door. "I just saw Dart get in there."

She nodded. "Okay." She was about to go in there to attack it, but Will grabbed her arm.

"Wait! He could hurt you!" She turned to him and stopped, realizing he could be right. After all, she didn't have anything to attack that creature with.

"Right, sorry."

He shook his head. "It's alright." She smiled at him, making him smile back and blush a little. He tried to get it away, his heart beating faster than before. Jeez, why was he doing this now? Was it because...

He remembered the confession advice Bob gave him this morning. Should he do it right now though? They were in a situation where-

"Are you alright?" the tomboy asked him, breaking out of his thoughts.

"Y-yeah, I just, uh..." He had all these feelings bottled up so much that he felt like he was going to explode. But then he remembered something: take a deep breath. He did so before saying, "Can I tell you something?" He was doing this...he was really doing this without being prepared.

She nodded. "Sure."

He took another deep breath. Since they were alone and this time was better than any today... "We've been friends for a very long time, haven't we?"

She nodded again. "Yeah, we have."

...

Mike was roaming through a hallway before he heard some voices. He froze, listening to the voices carefully...

...

Tell her how wonderful she is... "Ever since kindergarten, you always had my back and...you always stood up for me. I mean, I know you do it for Lucas and Dustin too, but I still appreciate it."

She smiled at him again. "Thanks. It's really no problem. I never liked seeing people get kicked down."

He nodded. "Right."

...

The freckled boy's eyes widened. He heard Jane's voice...Jane was near then. But who was she talking to? He slowly walked towards the sounds of their voices, trying to be out of sight as much as he could.

...

"And also, uh...you're into things I'm into like, uh, Dungeons and Dragons and, uh...technology stuff."

She nodded. "Yeah. I don't think I would've gotten into them if it weren't for you." She giggled a little. "I would've missed out."

His blush got more spread out, but he kept trying to tone it down, though he probably shouldn't in this case. Force of habit. But he liked being appreciated by her. "Well, uh, thanks."

...

He hid behind a wall, discreetly looking over to see Jane and Will, the boy he communicated with last year. He smiled at seeing her face again, but seeing her smile at Will, who was smiling back at her with a red face...it made him feel...uneasy.

...

"We always listened to each other and I really liked that you listened to me last night about..." He trailed off, shrugging a little. "You know."

"Anything for a friend." Friend... "So, uh, not to be rude, but what is this about, Will?"

God, he never felt so nervous in his life. But he had to pull through with it, just like Bob said. "I-I guess what I'm trying to say is..."

...

Will looked pretty nervous. Mike wondered why. He then heard him say, "You're a great person, Jane. You're unlike other girls, in a good way, and...you're a great friend."

He saw her blush a little, making him feel more uneasy and...feeling another thing he couldn't describe. "Wow, thanks, Will." He felt like...she shouldn't be with him right now.

...

"And, um, that's why I...I, uh..." Bob was right that this was easier said than done, but he still had to pull through to make it all worth it. "I wanted to ask you something."

Jane was curious. He was kind of acting a little weird. "Uh, okay. What did you want to ask?"

He cleared his throat and looked straight into her eyes bravely. "The Snow Ball's next month, right?"

...

The words "Snow Ball" hit Mike like a sack of bricks. Jane's promise to take him to the Snow Ball never left his memory. He wanted to go to the Snow Ball with her...but Will...was he going to...?

...

She nodded. "Yeah, of course it is."

He gulped, taking another deep breath. "Well, I was wondering if we could go there..."

...

He knew it.

He WAS going to ask her to go there with him.

The freckled boy felt something inside of him snap. He never wanted him to get the chance, so he tilted his head down...

...

"Like, with Lucas and Dustin?" she asked him.

"W-well, they could come too, but...I wanted to ask...uh..." Come on, pull through... "If you..." He suddenly spotted something from the corner of his eye, making him stop talking. But before he could really see what it was...

He suddenly got thrown right across the hallway by a strong force, landing across one of the exit doors hard. He let out a pained cry, rubbing the back of his head before he opened his eyes...and saw the school having the Upside-Down look. Just as he thought he wouldn't have another episode today...

...

That's what Mike did. He tilted his head up and threw him across the hallway to make sure he wasn't going to ask her to come to the Snow Ball with him. However, he saw Jane's aghast face, feeling awful to see it. "Will?!" she exclaimed. When she looked back, he hid himself from her sight.

...

Before she could go check up on him, she did notice that he could thrown hard by...nothing. Just a force...

A telekinetic force.

She looked back in shock, seeing no one there. She thought...it had to be Mike. It had to be. There was no doubt in her mind about it. After all this time...after nearly a year...

He threw Will like he was some rag doll?!

That made her decide not to go find him and to go check up on Will. He could have a concussion or something!

...

Will suddenly heard something whisking close to him. He felt the goosebumps rise and his skin crawl. The second he spotted a wave of dark matter come out from the hallway and rushing towards him, he stood up and pushed open the door, running away from it.

...

Jane heard the door open and saw her friend running, worrying her a lot. "Will, wait!" she cried out, running down the stairs. "Will!" She pushed open the exit door and left to go after him.

...

Now Mike felt absolutely terrible. First, she looked worried for him, and then she went after him, calling his name. He had watched her go, feeling very upset and...wanting to cry. He never thought things could go this way after what he did. Did she know it was him? Why did Will have to leave? Not that he minded that in particular, but THAT caused HER to leave too. He was her friend, but...he shouldn't go to the Snow Ball with her. Still...

He sighed heavily and began running away, holding back the guilt and the tears on his eyes. Suddenly, he bumped into someone, the two of them landing on the ground. "Ow..." groaned an unfamiliar



female voice. He stood up and saw a freckled, red-haired girl looking at him, annoyed. "What the hell?! Who are you?!" He wasn't to be spotted like this, so he just ran off as fast as he could to the nearest exit without being spotted any more.

Max was absolutely puzzled, yelling, "Asshole!" He didn't apologize for crashing into her like that. Jeez. She stood up and continued walking to the bathroom by Mr. Salerno's, hoping to see the rest of the group there.

...

Dustin managed to get there before anyone else and hide Dart in his hat. When Lucas and Max came in, the black-haired boy asked, "Where's Dart?"

He shrugged, trying to be coy. "I dunno. Not here."

Both him and the red-haired tomboy looked baffled. "What?!" They both looked in the stalls, not seeing the creature there.

"Maybe Will has him."

Will...wait.

"Where IS Will?" Lucas asked.

"And where's Jane?" Max also asked. Dustin just shrugged, but became just as concerned as they were.

---

Jane saw him run to the woods, then stopped and faced the school. She continued to run at him, yelling, "Will! WILL!" He had to be going through another episode, he had to. He wouldn't be acting like this otherwise.

She heard him say something to her (at least, she thought), making her slow down a little. She then finally heard him yell, "Go...away!" She then stopped on her tracks. Was he saying that to her? Or something else? Or was he saying that to her, thinking she was something else...?

"Will?" she called out to him, slowly walking towards him.

"Go away! GO AWAY! GO AWAY! GO AWAY!" She saw that he was completely terrified and near tears. He was also looking up at the sky, probably seeing that shadow monster he told her about.

"Oh my God, Will, snap out of it!" she shouted to him, quickening her walking pace. However, she suddenly saw him completely freeze up, his eye rolling to the back of his head. That terrified the hell out of her. What happened? Did it get him?! She finally approached him and shook him. "Will! Will, speak to me!" He didn't move a muscle, still stuck like he was. "Snap out of it! It's just another stupid episode!" He still hadn't moved. "Will!" She didn't want to think the shadow monster got him...but it did look like it. "WILL!"

---

**Stopping here. Poor Will...but how was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**Sorry that this is a day late! I just struggled with how Will is going to ask Jane out. I wanted to make it pretty awkward and shy because that's who he is. Hope I handled that well.**

**Oh yeah and Mike threw him across the hallway...yeah, instead of that scene with Max 'cause it wouldn't work in this AU, I had him do that to Will in this AU. Let's say that Jane's not going to be happy when she finally sees him again...**

**Oh and speaking of Max, I hope I handled her interactions with Jane well. These two deserve to be in a friendship, not one practically snarling at the other all the time. And she DID see Mike, despite her not knowing it was him...**

**Anyways, follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

**\*P.S.: As of next Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, I'll be going to my college classes, then at September 4th, I'll go back to my tech school (which means no more high school classes for me, yay!), so I dunno if I can keep updating every 2-3 days. I'll try though!\***

### 33. The Worst Day of His Life

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

Terry finally arrived at the middle school, parking her car and marching right to one of the entrances of the school. However, she suddenly heard a car going fast, making her stop and quickly look back to see...Joyce's car drive right into the grass and stop there, being surprised. The brunette got out of the car, looking just as surprised as she was for seeing her and walking towards her. "Terry?" she asked.

"Joyce?" she also asked. "What are you doing here?"

She sighed. "W-Will hasn't come home yet, so I called the school and they said that AV Club was cancelled, so I'm getting worried about him."

Oh right...it was after-school time. They both got into the school, the dirty-blonde-haired woman lying, "Well, I was actually going to pick up my daughter because she hasn't come home yet." She knew she could trust Jane to go home on her own unless it was late, but why tell her the real reason she was there?

"Then we both know what to do." She nodded at her, the two heading towards the AV Club room.

When they arrived there, Terry opened the door, her and Joyce seeing that no one was there. That actually made the two worry even more.

"Wait, Jane, slow down," they both heard Dustin say not too far from where they were. They both looked back and got out of the room to follow his voice. "Where are you guys and what's going on with Will?" The brown-haired woman looked more worried than before, the two finally seeing him, Lucas, and Max. The three saw the two mothers, looking surprised.

---

Jane took a deep breath, one hand shaking her auburn-haired friend while the other held her walkie-talkie. "W-we're at the field outside...I think Will's having another episode because he just ran, stopped, yelled, and then just froze," she stated in horror.

---

*"I've been trying to break him out of it, but he wouldn't budge."* That made Joyce worry even more about her son. The rest of them, even Terry, looked worried too.

"Stay there and don't move, but keep trying," the curly-haired boy told her.

*"Roger."*

He looked at everyone and said, "Follow me." They all did, running towards the nearest exit door and exiting out of the school.

When outside, they saw Jane shaking Will and yelling his name. They all ran to him, the girl looking back at them and moving out of the way for Joyce to do the same as she was doing. She looked puzzled when she saw her mom, standing next to her and muttering, "Mama?"

"Hey, sweetie..." Terry also muttered, looking just as scared as the others for Will.

"Will, it's me, sweetie, it's Mom!" Joyce said to break him out of the episode. Like with Jane, he wouldn't budge. "Will, wake up! Can you hear me?" She lightly slapped the side of his face. Jane looked the most scared and worried out of her friends while Terry nearly had the same expression. She thought he must have been so deep in his post-traumatic episode...despite her not knowing the truth. "Please, Will, just wake up!" Joyce was getting just as distressed as everyone else. "It's MOM! It's ME!" Still no response. "WILL!"

Finally, he opened his eyes and gasped loudly, his eyes as wide as plates. "Will?!" asked a distressed Joyce, making him look at her. "Are you alright, sweetie...?" He didn't answer her, shaking a little because...what Bob told him to do...didn't work...and now, he felt so...strange.

His mom hugged him tightly, almost about to cry. He looked at everyone else, seeing their scared and worried faces for him...Jane's saddening him even more. He didn't know what happened when he tried to ask her out, but...

This was the worst day of his life.

...

Everyone, now at the main entrance of the school, saw Joyce and Will go back to their car. "Okay, that REALLY freaked me out," Max told everyone. "Didn't that freak YOU guys out?" They did feel the same, but didn't answer her.

"Two episodes in two days..." Lucas said solemnly. "That can't be good." Will had TWO episodes in TWO days? That made Terry more worried about his health than before.

"It's getting worse for him..." Jane replied, also solemn and looking absolutely worried for him.

"Do you think it's True Sight?"

Both Terry and Max looked confused. "What's True Sight?" the red-haired girl asked.

The kids were silent, Lucas shaking his head. "It's nothing."

Everyone heard the car start and the two driving off. Jane deeply sighed before looking up at her mom. "Why are you here, Mama?" she asked Terry. "You don't pick me up often."

Now she had to lie to her own daughter about why she was there. She gently grabbed her arms and answered, "I just...I just felt like I should check up on you. I'm sorry." The girl frowned at her, making her heart feel like it crumbled a little. "You can just ride back home as usual, I'll just-"

The tomboy shook her head. "No, actually..." She felt so worried and scared for Will that... "I don't feel like riding back home today."

That surprised the woman, but this was her own daughter. "Do you

want me to drive you home?" She nodded at her as a reply. She was going to find Mike, but considering this situation and her daughter...she nodded back. "Go get your bike. I'll open the trunk."

"Okay, Mama." The two then left, Jane going to get her bike, leaving only Lucas, Dustin, and Max.

"Not to break the mood or anything..." Max said, the two boys looking at her. "But she calls her mom 'Mama'?"

They shrugged, Dustin answering, "Yeah, always did. Dunno why." She thought that was weird, but she'll let it go since Jane was NOT in a good mood, obviously.

---

In the car later, with her bike in the trunk, Terry drove Jane home, the curly-haired girl looking out of the window with the solemn look still on her face. Not only had Will gotten probably the worst episode he's ever experienced, but also MIKE caused it to happen. She couldn't feel more upset and frustrated like she was now.

"Do you wanna talk, Jane?" Terry asked her. She looked at her a little, but looked back out the window and didn't reply. She sighed and said, "I'm sorry you had to see Will go through that. Poor boy." Jane deeply sighed again, still not responding. Just one question, one question to ask her and she'll be done talking to her. "By the way...have you seen anything strange?" That was the best and the least suspicious question she could ask her about Mike.

That made the girl stiffen up. There was Dart...and Mike, though she didn't exactly SEE him. She looked at her mother. "Why are you asking, Mama?"

"I...heard some strange things were happening in this town. I was just wondering if you saw anything strange."

Should she tell her about Dart? No, he was missing now and telling her wouldn't help find him. What about Mike? Would she even believe her? Besides, she only saw that ability he had used on Will...why use it on him? She shook her head and replied, "No, I haven't."

"Are you sure?"

She nodded. "I'm sure, Mama." She looked back out the window, not wanting to talk anymore. Terry felt a little relieved to hear that Jane hasn't seen Mike in any way, shape, or form. Still...her search for him wasn't done. She needed to find him before it was too late.

"Okay. I'm going to be out for a bit."

Jane gave her a weird look. "Again?"

"I thought we need new clothes, so I'll be going shopping for them. When we get home, Kali is in charge, so you know the drill."

She sighed. "Yes, Mama." The woman knew what happened to Will was bothering her, which made her not want to speak any more. She didn't blame her, so the two just stayed silent for the rest of the trip.

...

They have arrived at their home, seeing a familiar car parked on the driveway. Both of them looked puzzled as the woman parked the car on the driveway to unbuckle and go out. With the keys in her hand, Terry went to the back of her car and used her keys to open up the trunk for Jane to get her bike. Just as she did, they both heard the door open and saw Jonathan come out of the house. He spotted the two, looking surprised.

"Ms. Ives, Jane," he greeted, having a friendly smile on his face.

Terry smiled back while Jane just carried her bike to the garage. "Hey Jonathan," she greeted back, closing the trunk. "Are you studying with Kali?"

Wow, she caught up with the lie he never told quick. "Yeah, I was just...getting some stuff from my car."

She nodded. "Okay. Can you tell Kali that I'll be going shopping for new clothes now, so she and you, probably, should look after Jane?"

Seriously? He thought she was just grocery shopping and that's it. However, he nodded at her since babysitting Jane wouldn't be that

much of a problem for him. "Yeah, sure."

"Thanks." She then went back into her car and started it up, backing out and driving away. He saw Jane get inside instantly, wondering about why she was quiet. He sighed before going into his car and getting his backpack.

He then went inside, got up the stairs and right back into Kali's room. The black-haired girl asked, "Is my mum back home?"

He shook his head. "Actually, she told me to tell you that she'll be shopping for new clothes and that we should look after Jane."

Kali gave him a weird look. "Really?" She knew she had plenty of clothes. Maybe she was shopping for herself and possibly Jane.

He nodded at her. "Yeah. Does she not do that?"

She shook her head. "It's not like that. It's just rare that she's out of the house for nearly an entire day." He nodded again, understanding. Kali was getting suspicious about what her mother was doing, but decided to let it go for their plan.

---

All day.

All day Terry was looking for Mike.

And she didn't succeed.

Where the hell could he have gone?

Feeling completely defeated, she decided to drive back to the secret cabin in the woods. She felt so awful for letting him escape so easily. What the hell would Jim even think of this?!

Oh, and speak of the devil...

She saw Jim's police car parked. She decided to park her car right next to it. She sighed heavily as she unbuckled herself and got out of the car, walking towards Hopper, who was waiting outside and smoking a cigarette. She looked very frustrated, walking up to him on



the porch and saying, "Jim, I'm so sorry."

He looked at her with his eyebrows arched up. "Sorry for what?"

She deeply sighed. "I...the coffee didn't wake me up entirely this morning, so I took a nap. When I woke up, I saw that the curtains were open and the door unlocked. I then noticed that Mike wasn't in the cabin, that he escaped while I took a nap, so I drove to Jane's school because he'd probably want to see her there. Then I didn't see him, so I dropped her off back home and then tried looking for him again, but..." She shook her head, looking at the ground and feeling completely awful. Her voice sounded very troubled and sorrowful. "I couldn't. I couldn't find him, Jim." The man looked sorry for her. "I'm sorry."

He decided to give her a hug and say, "It's okay, Terry. It's not your fault. You had no way to know this could happen." Though she couldn't forgive herself, he had a point. Besides, when she was alone with Mike on Thursday, he still wouldn't leave, even if she decided to take a nap.

"Doesn't get rid of the guilt, but thanks." He chuckled a little before letting her go and the two looking right into each other's eyes. "What should we do about him?"

Jim sighed and leaned on the wooden railing. "I was just standing here waiting for you and Mike to come back. Since you're here, you can wait with me."

She leaned on the wooden railing as well. "What makes you think he'll come back?"

"Where else would he go?" Right. "Plus, there's Jane. He's gotta be after her, right?"

She nodded as he smoked his cigarette. "Yeah, that's why I went to the school first."

"Best bet is that neither of them saw each other and he's coming back."

She nodded, especially since she indirectly asked Jane about Mike.

"Let's hope." The two then just continued to stand there on the balcony, waiting for the freckled boy to come back and talking more about what they should do when he comes back and what happened today.

...

When dusk turned into night, the boy walked through the secret path to the cabin again. He spotted the cars before seeing the two of them talking. He deeply sighed as the two then looked at him, locking their eyes with his. Jim had just smoked a new cigarette while Terry looked both shocked and upset to see him again. He knew they were mad at him and he wasn't exactly in the mood to deal with that right now.

As Jim ashed his cigarette, the boy walked towards the cabin, Terry getting off of the porch and walking towards him. "Michael," she called to him sternly. As they got close, he managed to slip right past her before she could grab him. "Mike." He didn't answer her as he went inside, the two adults following right after him and slamming the door closed.

"Listen to when an adult's talking to you, kid," Jim told him in a strict voice. He still didn't respond, storming right into his room. He took his hat off and yelled, "Hey! Hey!" He was about to slam the door on the two, but the police chief swung it back open. "Don't walk away from us!" He stopped and glared daggers at the both of them.

While the man leaned against the doorway, the woman went a little further, stopped, crossed her arms and asked sharply, "What did you think you were doing, Michael?" He didn't answer, still having that sharp glare. "You have no right to get out while I was sleeping!" He rolled his eyes at her, offending her. "Don't you roll your eyes at me, young man."

"Yeah, Mike," Jim chimed in. "Terry thought you went to Jane's school on your little field trip. Is that where you went?" He looked shocked that they knew it, which was enough of an answer of the two of them. "Did you see her? Did you see Jane?" He didn't answer, looking away from them and placing his hands on his hips. "I asked you a question and that means you must answer it."

Maybe she didn't see him, but still... "Answer him, Mike. Did you really see her? Did you really see my daughter?"

"She didn't see me..." he mumbled.

Jim scoffed and told him, "What was that, kid? I think neither of us heard you."

He looked at them again and said loudly, "She DIDN'T see me!"

Terry sighed. "Well, I can confirm that. I asked her when I drove her home." At least...though he still felt awful.

"Well, guess who saw you, bud?" Jim stopped leaning against the doorway and walked with Terry as they got close to him. "That mother and daughter you encountered. You know what they did? They called the cops." Now Mike crossed his arms, looking at the two frustrated adults and their teary eyes. "Now, did anyone else see you? At all?" There was that strange girl, but he would never mention her.

"Mike, we need you to be honest with us," the dirty-blond-haired woman asked him, her voice sounding strained.

"You need to THINK!"

He yelled at the two of them, "NO ONE SAW ME!"

"DON'T YELL AT US!" Terry and Jim both rubbed their faces, feeling so angered and frustrated by him. "Do you know how long I've been LOOKING for you?! Do you know how WORRIED I got for looking for you?! Do you know that you SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME when I saw you weren't here?! DO YOU?!" She would never lose her cool like this, but this was her life and others on the line. Plus, he made a terrible decision. Jim knew that too. Mike just became stiff and gripped on the sleeves of his sweater tight, trying to hold back the tears welling up in his eyes.

"Do you even know that you put us all in danger?" Jim asked him sharply. "Do you even realize that? Not even just you, but me, Terry, even Jane..."

Just hearing her name made him feel more terrible than before. He

pointed at him. "You..." He then pointed at Terry. "And you...told me that I can go." He paused to point outside before putting his hand down aggressively. "But I NEVER DO! NOTHING EVER HAPPENS!"

"NOTHING HAPPENS AND WE ALL STAY SAFE!" Jim yelled, slamming the wall and making him and even Terry tense up, though she thought it was warranted.

She pointed at him, saying, "I keep telling you again and again that you should never be in contact with Jane! I keep telling you that it's for your own SAFETIES!"

Now something in Mike was snapping into pieces. "SHE MISSES ME! YOU ALWAYS LIE TO HER ABOUT ME!" That made her blood run cold and her wanting to cry. He looked at both her and the police chief. "YOU BOTH ALWAYS LIE TO ME!"

Jim looked like he was about to cry as well, but he kept yelling, "We don't LIE TO YOU! We PROTECT, FEED, AND TEACH YOU!"

Terry sobbed into her mouth, but kept holding her tears back. "Mike...all that we asked of you was to follow three rules." She held up three fingers. "Three simple rules. Three is not a lot..."

"And you know what? YOU CAN'T EVEN DO THAT!"

"You can't even follow THREE rules! Three rules that even a YOUNG CHILD would follow!" Mike could break down into tears right now, but he tried to keep a stiff upper lip to prevent that from happening. Besides, he was so angry at them right now, it could rival when the doctor tried to take Jane last year.

"I love her..." he muttered, sounding like he was about to break.

Hopper looked surprised at that, but Terry kept her angered look at him. "That's not an excuse," she replied rather coldly, shaking her head.

The man nodded and said, "Yeah, she's right. So what if you love Jane? That doesn't mean you should go out and put us in DANGER because you have feelings for her! That's STUPID!" The boy seriously looked like he was about to break, but what's done was done.

They got out of his room, making him slam the wall with his hand in utter frustration. Terry then announced, "We both decided that you'll be grounded!" Knowing what that means thanks to Terry in the past, he felt like he was crumbling.

"We decided for no more Eggos and ice cream..." Jim added, taking the Eggos and ice cream tubs out of the fridge and throwing them in the trash. Mike felt like he crumbled more. "And no TV for a week." That got to him completely. No TV? How else was he supposed to do when he was bored?!

He got out of his room when he saw Terry about to pull the cart. He tilted his head down and used his power to keep it in place when she pulled. She looked at him with an agitated face, demanding sharply, "Let go." His nose was bleeding and he shook his head.

Jim got next to her, looking at him and saying, "Come on, buddy, knock it off." He gestured Terry to move, in which she did, and tried to pull it away as well. However, it still got stuck in place by the boy's power. "Let go." He shook his head again, making the two adults exchange glances before looking back at him. "Okay, then two weeks." He tried again and that didn't work, much to his and Terry's irritation. "Let. GO!"

"No," he coldly replied.

"Then a month!" Terry shouted at him.

"No!"

She scoffed at his behavior, looking at Jim. "Should we...?" she whispered to him.

He sighed. "He won't seem to listen, so..." She nodded before the two looked at him once again.

"Fine, Michael. You want to be like that?" She gestured Hopper to do what he must to the TV. "Then you won't have any TV AT ALL!" He pulled the cords, permanently shutting it down and damaging it.

He looked completely shocked that he did that, exclaiming, "NO!" They both walked away from the TV as he ran to it, trying to see if he

could fix it. "No...no..." It was damaged...they really meant no TV at all. He hated that.

"You need to learn that there are consequences to your actions, Mike," Jim told him.

"We're teaching you how to LIVE in the outside world," Terry added. "And that is the most important lesson of them all!"

This only made him more mad than before. He pointed at the two of them, yelling, "YOU TWO ARE *JUST* LIKE DAD AND THE DOCTOR!"

That made their blood run cold and their hearts crumble.

Jim leaned against the wall, rubbing the bridge of his nose, while Terry looked down and covered her mouth again, aghast at him saying that and feeling like she was going to cry again. She looked at him and said meekly, "You don't mean that."

"I do." That hit them both like a ton of bricks.

"We're REALLY like those psychotic sons of bitches?" Jim asked.

He nodded. "Yes, you are."

Terry scoffed before she stormed to him. "Did they give you a warm and comfortable bed? Good food? Television? HOSPITALITY?!" He froze up at that statement just as she got close to him. "No, they didn't. They treated you like an object, like you're nothing more than a damn lab rat!"

He decided to retort, "But you two keep me here, like they do."

"For your own safety!"

"You two NEVER let me do what I want!"

"Stop acting like a little BRAT!"

"Shut the hell up, Terry!" Both her and Jim gasped at him saying that. Where the hell did he get that phrase from?! Without a second thought, she slapped him across the face, making him hitch his

breath and release a couple of tears. His cheek hurt from that, affecting the rest of his face. His breath became shaky as he looked up at her with his teary eyes. The woman realized what she had done, making her gasp once again and feel more awful than before.

"I'm so sorry, Michael." She pulled him into a hug, but he was quick to shove her off.

"Get off of me!" That broke her heart more than before, seeing him yell that while tears streamed down his face.

Jim didn't like what she did, but comforted her a little by placing a hand on her shoulder. "Listen, what Terry did was bad, but she didn't mean it," he told him. She was glad he understood, but the boy looked unconvinced. "You need to get your act together, young man! You don't talk to any of us like that and you don't shove either of us!"

Mike sniffled and wiped his tears away. "I hate you both!"

That made Terry release a tear, making Jim sad for her and more mad at him. "You keep thinking that, buddy. It'll get you nowhere! You know why? You're what Terry said, a BRAT!"

The dirty-blonde-haired woman thought now he was just rubbing salt on the wound, so she said, "Jim-"

He grabbed a dictionary from the counter and said, "How about that be your word of the day? Brat? B-R-A-T." He tossed the dictionary to the boy, but he used his power to stop it in mid-air. Shocking them both, he used it to throw it to the man aggressively, making him grunt a little.

"Hey!" Terry yelled at him, the two walking towards him. However, he then shifted the couch to hit Terry's leg, making her scream a little.

"Terry!" the man exclaimed, but the woman tried to regain her balance.

"I'm fine." They both saw Mike storm right back to his room, the two trying to chase after him. "MICHAEL!"

"MIKE!" The boy used his power to knock down the bookshelf, much to their frustration. "HEY!"

"THAT WAS COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY!" The boy got in his room and used his power to slam the door shut and lock it. Hopper tried to turn the knob and it didn't work, leading him and Terry to pound on the door. "OPEN THE DOOR, MICHAEL!"

"OPEN THE DAMN DOOR, MIKE!"

...

Inside, he leaned against the wall and sunk into the floor, continuing to cry as they both yelled at him to open the door. As if this day wasn't bad enough, these two had to remind him of how his dad and the doctor treated him. They might have given him more than them, but that didn't excuse their behavior towards him now and what they've been doing ever since they found him. He just wanted to see Jane again...he just wanted to get away from here...

...

"Michael! I didn't mean to slap you, but you still need to fix your attitude!" Terry yelled through the door. "You are NOT going to survive out there if you keep it!"

"Yeah, you need to GROW UP!" Jim added just as loudly. "You wanna go out in the world?! THEN GROW UP! GROW THE HELL UP!"

...

That was it.

He couldn't take it anymore.

Michael just let out his frustration, sadness, and anger by screaming from the top of his lungs.

...

That made all the windows instantly break apart. Terry screamed a little, both her and Hopper trying to shield themselves from the flying



pieces of glass. When the flying glass stopped, they both looked around, seeing the complete mess Mike created. They both wanted to yell at him for it, but that was just rubbing more salt on the wound.

...

The boy covered his face with his hands, crying and sobbing. This was the worst day of his life. Everything went so wrong...he hated it...he hated Will, he hated Jim and Terry...he hated everything right now.

...

Hearing his crying and sobbing from behind the door made the two adults begin to cry, Terry sobbing. She couldn't believe herself. She couldn't get her daughter to behave well at school, then she always lied to her whenever Mike came up, then she yells and even slaps Mike tonight, and now he was breaking down...

What the hell was she doing? She made him so upset...so frustrated...

Jim hugged her for comfort as she cried into his chest. She hugged him back, the two needing the comfort after a messy argument like that. They didn't mean for this to happen...

What kind of parent figures were they?

---

**Is it bad that I wrote this all in one go? What does that say about me...? Anyways, how was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**Poor Will...and poor Mike. Both boys had the worst day of their lives...**

**So...the argument. I figured it'd be a bit more longer and intense with Terry around, so I hope it was. Watching the canon scene always made me feel uneasy because of how messy it became, so writing it with Terry in this AU was no exception. Just...damn...**

**Anyways, review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter.**

## 34. Today's Just Not Your Day

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Now arriving at home with a bag of clothes she got before the clothing store closed, Terry got out of her car and grabbed it, slamming it shut. She noticed that Jonathan's car was gone, meaning that he went back home. She sighed deeply, hoping Will and Joyce were alright as well as the teen himself. She got inside and walked upstairs, removing her shoes and placing them in her closet. She placed the bag next to her bed before she began to change into her night gown.

She was still feeling shaken by the argument with Michael earlier. Not even what he did this morning could top what he did tonight. He needed to learn how to deal with the consequences of his actions and to act more mature...

But was she and Jim in the right for that argument? Because she felt like they weren't. Mike wasn't excused from his behavior, but...God, they could've handled the situation better than they did.

He got completely mad at them and broke all the windows.

Before she left, Jim had tried to reassure her that they did the best they could, but did they really? To be honest with herself...they were just as bad as he was. Both of them and Mike just kept yelling and getting angry at each other. Neither of them did the best they could, really.

As she made her ponytail into a bun, she got startled when she heard a knock on the door. "Mum?" Kali called through the door.

"Mama?" Jane also called through the door. She let out a deep sigh, knowing that she made the excuse that she was going clothing shopping in the afternoon and it was now night.

She walked towards the door and opened it, seeing the girls in their pajamas. Kali wore her favorite lavender night dress while Jane wore

a long-sleeved, white and blue-dotted pajama shirt with matching pajama pants. It was rare that they would be together like this, and it was because of her. "I don't want sound rude or anything, but you usually don't shop for clothes until night," the Indian girl told her.

"Yeah, what's going on?" asked the curly-haired girl.

She sighed and looked at her two daughters. "I'm sorry to worry you both. I just..." She looked at the ground. "I've just getting stressed out."

"Why? Is it your job?"

She shook her head at her. "No."

Jane gulped. "Is it Will?" She didn't want to be reminded of what happened to the poor kid, but now that she said it, that could be another reason.

Kali looked concerned, asking, "Wait, what about him?"

"Listen, girls, I don't know why I'm suddenly so stressed out." The two looked more worried for her, making her feel more stressed than before. She faked a smile and hugged the girls. "Don't worry about me. I'll try to get rid of this stress. You two should go to sleep." She kissed the sides of their heads and let them go. They didn't look all that reassured, but nodded and left to their own rooms. She closed the door and let out another deep sigh, feeling more guilty about what she was doing. God, was this day shitty...

...

Meanwhile, Kali got into her room and turned off all of the lights in her room, getting into her bed. She wondered if she should tell Terry what she and Jonathan were going to do. She was acting a bit stressed out lately. Would telling her raise that stress? She had trusted her and Jonathan to go out before...

Maybe it wouldn't hurt to ask her in the morning before breakfast.

Settling in with that thought, she closed her eyes and began to sleep.

...

Jane got into her bed and pulled her blanket over her, feeling tired yet not willing to sleep. What happened back at school earlier stuck with her. She felt so awful for Will. She may not know what the hell happened during his episode...but she had a strong feeling that it involved the shadow monster. She should go check up on him tomorrow at school.

Wait, would he even go back to school after an experience like that? She guessed she'll have to find out when she goes to school tomorrow.

Also...Mike.

Why did he throw Will like that? She needed to understand. It couldn't be for no reason. Could it be because he thought he was about to attack her? No, that's stupid. Could it be that he didn't...like Will? How could he not? He was so willing to save him last year. So that reason seemed stupid as well. What else could be the reason?

Suddenly, she remembered something...Will mentioned the Snow Ball. She had promised Mike to bring him to the Snow Ball.

Did he throw him because he thought he was going to ask her to the Snow Ball?

There was no way Will, her best friend, was going to ask her...well, actually, now that she thought about it...he was acting a little weird talking to her. Plus, he was going to ask her something before he got thrown...

She was getting way too tired to think more about this, so she decided to finally go to sleep, hoping tomorrow was a better day.

...

Now being up early in the morning, the Ives family had began eating breakfast, which was pancakes and fruit. Jane had an Eggo as a side as well. Terry wore her waitress uniform, Jane wore a blue and white shirt, her usual brown jacket, blue jeans, and sneakers, and Kali wore a lavender sweater, black jeans, and white and purple high-tops.

When the pieces of toast popped out of the toaster, Kali went up to it with her plate to get them. Terry looked at her and said, "Kali." She looked back at her, placing one piece of toast next to her pancakes and fruit. "You're going to be fine when you get to...Ally's, right?"

She was a bit puzzled at first, but quickly realized what her mother was really saying so that Jane wouldn't get suspicious. She nodded, placing the other piece of toast on her plate before handing that to her little sister and replying, "Yeah, don't worry about me. We're just gonna do...girl stuff." The woman chuckled and nodded before resuming to eat her breakfast.

Kali had talked to her about her plan to Terry. As much as she was worried for her, Kali had proven to handle herself well. Maybe not when she and Jonathan were getting supplies to kill the Demogorgon, but when she, him, and Steve killed that thing in the Byers home. It didn't make her less worried, but she trusted Kali and what she was going to do was something Terry never thought of doing herself. She was so proud of her.

As Jane kept eating her food, she realized that she didn't try to contact Mike last night because she was so tired. As much as she felt bad for that, he wasn't exactly important to her right now. Plus, he threw Will because he probably thought he was going to ask her out to the Snow Ball.

Jeez...that thought did not resonate well with her.

Why WOULD Will ask her out? He was just a friend...but he did tell her how good of a friend she was to him before trying to ask the question...

"Are you alright, Jane?" Terry asked her, also seeing that Kali looked at her as well.

She just nodded and lied, "Yeah, yeah, I'll be fine." Terry assumed she was thinking of Will, patting her head before she continued eating. The curly-haired girl appreciated that her mother was trying to cheer her up after what happened yesterday. However, it still didn't help this feeling of uneasiness her thoughts gave her.

She decided to drop that and think about what to say to Will at school...

---

After breakfast, Kali got out with her bag...going to Jonathan's car. She opened the door, getting his attention and making him greet, "Morning."

"Morning," she greeted back as she put her bag in the back and sat on the passenger's seat, closing the door and buckling herself up. "I told my mum about the plan." He gave her a worried look, but she gave him a reassuring one. "Don't worry, she likes what we'll be doing."

He smiled a little. "That's good."

"What about your mum? Have you talked to her?"

He shook his head. "No, she was still sleeping, but I left a note."

She nodded at him. "Are you ready for this?"

He nodded back at her. "Are you?"

She grinned at him. "More than ever." He grinned back at her before starting up the car and driving off to the park, where they can finally begin their plan.

---

At Hawkins Middle, there was no sign of Will, but it still was before school, so Jane didn't get too worried yet. Right now, she, Lucas, and Max were at the back of the school near the dumpster, having trash picks and arguing about who goes in to find Dart. "Will you quit being a baby and just do it?" Jane asked him. He released a deep sigh before jumping right in there.

Max made a disgusted noise as she asked her, "Do any of us really have to do this? This is so disgusting."

She sighed and looked at her. "I mean, some animals eat garbage, so..." It was Lucas's idea to find Dart before class, but it was hers to look in the dumpster.

The red-haired girl shrugged. "I guess you're right."

Suddenly, Dustin appeared, looking puzzled at the two girls. "What's going on?" he asked them.

"We're looking for Dart, that's what's going on," the curly-haired girl answered before Lucas threw two trash bags without warning, the kids getting out of the way.

"Jesus!" Dustin exclaimed.

"Warn us next time!" Jane also exclaimed.

"Sorry," the black-haired boy replied as he hopped right out of the dumpster and looked at Dustin. "Well, well...look who FINALLY decided to show up!" He spread his arms before putting them to his sides. "And it's right AFTER I drew the short straw. REALLY convenient." Well, Jane did agree with Lucas, but...

The girls smelt his garbage scent, even though they were a couple feet away from him. They both looked disgusted, Max walking and standing right next to Dustin as she told the black-haired boy, "You stink!"

Dustin smiled at her, the two looking at each other as he greeted, "Hi."

"Uh, hi," she awkwardly greeted back, much to Lucas's displeasure. Jane just stepped back to make sure she was far from the smell.

The curly-haired boy noticed that Will wasn't around, making him ask, "Hey, where's Will?"

Everyone shrugged. "He'll be here," Jane answered him.

"Are ya just gonna stand there...?" Lucas asked him before tossing him a trash pick. "Or are ya gonna find Dart with us?" He gave him a glare before they all started picking at the trash, hoping to find him in there.

But they didn't.

---

In their homeroom, class had began and Mr. Clarke began talking to the class about danger instincts. While he was talking about that, Jane looked at the seat next to her, seeing that Will was still not there. That made her worry more and feel the unwelcome deja-vu of last year, when Will didn't come the day after the game. She knew he wasn't trapped in the Upside Down this time, but she thought this meant that something serious happened while he was out on the field yesterday. She hoped he was alright...

---

Jim was nailing in some boards to cover up the windows back at the cabin. When he was finished with the last one, he turned to see Mike peering through a crack on a door before he closed it. He sighed, feeling like shit for what he and Terry did last night. He tried to reassure her and himself that they did the best they could...but he felt like they didn't really. They both just made things worse. He thought he'd never have a heated argument like that ever again, especially when he remembered his interactions with his father and mother, but last night...he felt like he was as bad as the both of them were to him.

That didn't excuse what Mike did, but neither he nor Terry were in the right either.

Speak of the devil, he heard her car, probably, pull up and stop. He then heard the door close and steps that became louder as they got closer. He then heard the special knock. He went to the door and unlocked it, opening it up and seeing her in her waitress uniform, admiring her beauty in it for only a few seconds. She looked worried. "Is Mike alright?" she asked him.

He sighed once again, letting her in and closing the door. "Kid didn't even come out of there since last night." Her lips drew to a line, the two arriving at the door to his room and staring at it for a bit. They looked at each other, hoping things would go well, before looking at the door. The woman then greeted, "Hey, Michael."

...

He was right in front of the door, not wanting to open it, not even for Terry. He wore a gray, multi-colored, collared shirt and blue jeans.



"Hey, kid..." he heard Jim also greet through the door.

"Are you doing alright?" He didn't answer, looked away from the door, leaned against it, and crossed his arms.

...

Terry sighed as Hopper said, "Listen, kid, about last night, we, uh..." He trailed off, looking like he didn't know what to say to him exactly. He didn't want to make him more pissed off.

"Michael..." she said solemnly. "What I did to you last night was uncalled for and I'm sorry."

Jim guessed he should roll similarly to what she was saying. "Yeah, we're both sorry about last night, kid."

...

He huffed, still not answering either of them as he looked up at the ceiling. He was just so frustrated with them right now that he didn't even want to see them.

...

The two adults looked defeated, stepping away from the door. "What should we do?" the dirty-blonde-haired woman whispered to the police chief.

His lips drew to a line before thinking up of something and going back to the door. "Alright, buddy," he told Mike through the door. "You don't need to talk to us now. You need your space, I get it. We'll let you have your space."

...

Mike looked back, feeling kind of relieved that they were going to do that for him. He didn't want to see their faces anyway. "But here's the thing: we're both going off to work. That means you'll have to clean all of this up. If this cabin looks clean by the time we get back, then we'll consider fixing the TV, alright?" He sighed. Had they really changed from last night? But the fact that they would fix the TV if he

cleaned up everything...

...

Terry didn't feel good when he said that, whispering, "Jim..."

"Let's go," he whispered back to her as he put his hat on and grabbed his coat from the coat rack. She looked back at Mike's room, frowning. She thought that maybe he should clean up the cabin. If her daughters misbehaved, one way to punish them was to make them do a chore. If they did it, they can get one thing they wanted most with the exception of a few. Cleaning up the cabin to have the TV fixed seemed like a fair deal. She just hoped that Mike would take it.

"Let's go, Terry," the man called out to her.

She looked away from the door and walked to him. "I'm coming." The door was opened and then it closed when they got outside.

...

The freckled boy stopped leaning against the door and thought about the offer. He didn't want to go out, not after what happened in here and at the school yesterday, and he really wanted that TV fixed, so he'll do it. He'll clean up the cabin if it meant the TV will be back to normal.

...

As the two got off of the porch, Jim asked, "You feeling okay?"

Terry scoffed. "I wish." Honestly, he felt the same. "But I hope Mike can get his act together."

He nodded. "Yeah...and I hope that we can..." She looked at him in concern, making him trail off. He shrugged a little. "You got work, I do too, so I'll see you later." He then went into his police car without another word. She wondered if he thought the same thing she did, about them also being unreasonable like Mike was last night.

But he was right, they both have work to be done, so she got into her

car and started it up. As Jim left rather quickly, making her assume the situation with the pumpkins was getting bad now, she followed suit, hoping not to be late this time.

---

After an intense game of Shirts vs. Skins, all of the guys began to take a shower in the locker room. It was a shame for Steve to take a shower near Billy and Tommy. "Hey, don't sweat it, Harrington," the blonde-haired guy said to him. "Today's just not your day." God, does this douchebag ever shut up?

"Yeah, it's just not your week, man," Tommy added. "First, you get ten minutes of heaven tasting Kali's 'curry' during the party..."

He just shook his head at him. "That's not true," he stated. "It's just a stupid rumor."

"Oh really? Then why'd she run off with that lonely freak?" That statement shocked him, making him look up.

"What?"

Tommy looked surprised that he didn't know. "Aw shit, y'don't know?" He didn't answer, wiping the water off of his body with the towel while still looking shocked. "Jonathan and your little Indian doll skipped 4th period yesterday and still hasn't shown." He put on a shit-eating grin and leaned against the shower pole a little. "Ain't that just a coincidence?" He didn't want to give him any more of his attention, but he was still in a state of shock. "Ya do your business with her while she was drunk and then she runs off with a freak!" He laughed. "Now they can both be a freaky couple!" He shut off his shower and walked away, grabbing a towel to wipe himself off with.

Steve still couldn't believe it. He didn't see Kali today...she couldn't have believed the rumors and ran off with Jonathan. They were just friends...right? He grabbed his shampoo, poured some in one hand, and began lathering his hair.

"Hey, don't take that too hard, man," Billy told him, leaning against the shower pole. "A relationship like that wasn't gonna last long anyway." As if he wasn't much of an ass... "Plus, a pretty boy like

you's got nothing to worry about. Plenty of bitches in the sea." Like the asshole he was, he shut off Steve's shower, much to his irritation. "Especially ones that look better than her." He gave him a sharp glare before he patted his back and began to leave. "I'll be sure to leave ya some." Does Billy really need to prove that he was a complete asshole time and time again? Steve decided to not care what he thinks.

But still...there was the case of Kali.

Did she really believe those rumors? She would have talked to him...but...maybe she felt too ashamed to even do that. After all, he probably looked suspicious to her when he tried to avoid the topic of what happened in the bathroom during the party. He knew he could be stupid, but he still got mad at himself for it. And for her to run off with Jonathan...why? Were they just friends? He never really gotten a "I have a crush on your girlfriend" vibe from him at all...but he could be good at hiding it. Otherwise, he would have never ran off with her.

"Damn it..." he muttered under his breath as he switched on the shower to wash out his hair. He screwed up...big time.

---

In the rather bustling Forrest Hills Park, Kali and Jonathan looked around for Mrs. Holland and possibly Mr. Holland too. They saw kids playing on equipment and others playing Duck, Duck, Goose. Any adults there were probably looking over/playing with their kids or reading a newspaper. Jonathan was fidgeting a little while Kali sat perfectly still, looking down at her watch and sighing. "Fifteen after..." she muttered, the two looking at each other. She noticed him moving around a little, making her ask, "You alright?"

"Yeah, just..." he answered in a whisper. "Nervous." Honestly, she felt nervous about this as well. She had kept on the hope that things will go according to plan.

"Me too, but we shouldn't look so suspicious."

He nodded. "Yeah, I know."

As they both continued to look around, the Indian girl spotted a man

reading a newspaper and talking...if that didn't look so suspicious. She leaned towards her friend and whispered, "Hey, see that guy?"

He looked at the same guy and replied quietly, "Yeah? What about him?"

"He just talked to himself." That did sound creepy. It also didn't help that the man looked up at them, making them look away.

Jonathan spotted a man spreading around bird feed while Kali looked at parents push their children around in the merry-go-round. They continued looking around, their nervousness slowly increasing. They both looked at a bunch of kids playing Duck, Duck, Goose, two women supervising them, then two women stopping after a jog.

The auburn-haired guy saw the man with the bird feed look at him and the black-haired girl saw one of them women supervising the children looking at her. They both then saw one guy walking his dog and looking at them too. They also spotted the two women running looking at them too. Kali had seen a woman near the merry-go-round look at them as well. One man passing by with a suitcase also looked at them. This was creepier than they thought...

When they heard one of the kids yell, "Goose!", Kali whispered to Jonathan, "We should leave."

"Definitely," he replied as they both stood up and began walking out of the park and to his car. They both felt like they were being followed somehow.

When they reached to his car, they saw the guy with the suitcase walk out of the park as well. They both got in and buckled themselves, the guy getting his keys and trying to start up the car. It couldn't start up, much to their worry. Suddenly, a knock on the window made Kali jump a little, seeing the guy who had the newspaper earlier smiling at them. They both knew they couldn't trust him, so they just looked at him.

"Morning, you two," he greeted them in an unusually friendly voice. "I see that your car doesn't work. Is it alright if I suggest that you guys can take a lift from me?"

They didn't answer him, but then they saw a few people approaching them, their complete nervousness at its peak. There was the guy with the suitcase, then the guy with the dog, then the woman that was near the merry-go-round. When the man knocked on the door again, he asked with a smile, "You two sure you don't need that lift?" So this was it then...

They were caught.

---

Stopping right here. What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed? I knew going back to college and soon tech school would screw with the usual schedule. Oh well, they won't stop me from updating whenever I can. That said, they are important to me and I need to do my best in them.

Anyways...

How do you guys like that extra scene with the Ives girls? I felt like Jane and Kali would worry for their mother after seeing her be gone for "shopping" until night.

I hope you guys don't mind Terry letting Kali go on with her plan. It is something she would like to do herself AND she had trusted Kali to go out with Jonathan before. She just hopes she'll be alright.

So I made Hopper and Terry apologize a little early. Mike still doesn't like them...though he would clean up to have the TV fixed.

Ah Billy and Tommy, being assholes as usual. But now Steve thinks of the worst...how will that go for him...?

Review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

## 35. You Wouldn't Understand, Okay?

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

After class, Jane got outside of the school and used the nearest phone to call the Byers house. She had called five times and it always goes to voicemail. She hung up when she heard Joyce's voice in the voicemail for the fifth time, deeply sighing. This meant that Will was in big trouble...

She ran back to her friends, who were all waiting on the steps. "Anything?!" Lucas called out to her.

When she got close to them, she said, "We need to talk in the AV room NOW." That made everyone get their things and follow her. She stopped when she saw Max about to follow her too. Everyone else stopped, including her.

"What?" she asked.

She was wondering if she should even be a part of the discussion they were going to have. Well, it wasn't like she was going to mention...Mike, in any way. Plus, Max DID see what they all saw yesterday, with Dart AND Will. But...she has no idea that the Upside Down exists and would probably think they're crazy because of it. She told her, "I'm sorry, but you can't join."

She gave her a baffled look. "What? Why?"

"It's, uh...something personal, something you shouldn't know yet."

She scoffed. "Come on, I can keep a secret."

She shook her head. "You wouldn't understand, okay? Sorry." She then gestured the boys to follow her, making them do so and say their apologies to the redhead. She was completely baffled by this. Would it kill them to MAKE her understand? What was it that she wouldn't understand?!

---

In the AV room, Jane sat on the table and told the two boys, "I promised Will I wouldn't tell anyone this, but..." She paused for a bit. "Remember when he ran off on Halloween and I chased after him?" The two boys nodded at her. "Well, he ran because he saw some kind of shadow in the sky."

The two boys looked both worried and puzzled. "A shadow? What kind of shadow?" Lucas asked.

She shrugged. "I don't know. He told me it was huge and it was coming for him." Now they just looked worried. "If Will REALLY has True Sight, if he could REALLY see into the Upside Down, then he could've seen that shadow yesterday."

"That's why he was frozen like that?" Dustin asked.

She nodded a little. "I think so."

"But could it hurt him?" the dark-haired boy asked. "I mean, if this shadow thing's not from our world..."

She shook her head a little, thinking about when she saw Will suddenly freeze up. She thought it was because the shadow got him, but maybe... "I dunno." She looked at the curly-haired boy. "Dustin?"

He sighed. "If you're in another plane, you can't interact with the material plane, so theoretically speaking, no, it can't hurt him."

Could that be true though? "If that's even what's happening...I mean, this is real-life, not D&D."

"So, what do we do?"

"We get more knowledge." She pointed at herself for a second. "I'll go by Will's after school and see what's going on." She then pointed at the two boys. "You two, and Max, continue looking for Dart here."

That made Dustin give her a puzzled look. "Dart? The hell's Dart gotta do with this?" Lucas gave him a rather concerned look.

"Will heard the noises he was making in the Upside Down. I don't know how yet, but he HAS to be connected to the Upside Down



somehow. If we find Dart, then maybe we can solve this thing. Maybe we can help Will." The boys didn't reply to her, but nodded.

---

Back in the cabin, Mike was crouching down and looking at the ripped-out wires that was connected to the TV, truly seeing why it wouldn't work. He sighed and threw them down. He looked around, seeing the complete mess he made last night, especially with the glass. It wasn't like he broke the windows on purpose. He was just really upset and angry that he didn't have any control of his powers at that point.

Since Jim offered to fix the TV if he cleaned this entire cabin, then he'll gladly do so, even if he still was a little mad at him and Terry.

He started by walking to the dictionary on the floor and picking it up. He blew the dust off of it and placed it on the table. He then looked at the bookshelf and used his power to put it back up again. He saw all the things it dropped on the floor, so he went to those, picked them up, and put them back on the bookshelf where they belong. Once he was done with that, he took a deep breath before grabbing the broom to clean up the glass.

...

While he was sweeping the glass from the floor into a pile, he reached to the couch. He shoved it away a little and continued sweeping until he spotted a piece of glass stuck between a rather open crack. Curious, he used his power to completely push the couch away and propped the broom onto the table, crouching down and pulling out the piece of glass. He threw it to the pile before he put two fingers through the large crack and lifted it up, seeing that it was a secret door, much to his surprise.

All he saw when he opened it was darkness, but it didn't stop his curiosity. He looked around for a flashlight and remembered seeing one in a drawer of the bookshelf, so he got that from there. He then turned it on and poked his head down into the secret floor, seeing a bunch of boxes with labels on it. He saw a white one labelled "New York", then another labelled..."Vietnam"? He wondered what a "Vietnam" was. He continued looking around until he spotted a box

labelled "Hawkins Lab". His eyes widened at the sight of that. What was a box like that doing underneath the floor...? Did Jim and Terry know about this?

He decided to get himself into the secret floor and crawl to that box. He grabbed it and went to the opening, placing it near there before crawling back up from it. He grunted a little, since the opening was a little small. When he finally got on the ground floor, he opened up the box and got out a folder. He opened that up, seeing a bunch of papers in it. He wondered what could be in there...

---

Inside the Lab's interrogation room was Kali and Jonathan, the guy moving his foot a little and the girl tapping her fingers on the table. They were just brought in there and were left for what felt like hours on end, just looking around and staring at each other. Kali couldn't help but think of what her mother told her last year when she was explaining how she got into the Upside Down. She mentioned being in this room, talking to...him. She didn't even WANT to call that man her father, because he wasn't, not even legally-speaking. Still...she said that being in here wasn't exactly very pleasant and neither was talking to him, so...

She looked at the camera in the room and stood up, having a cold expression on her face as she asked bitterly, "Hey, arseholes, why don't you let us out?"

As if he heard her from the room, Dr. Owens, the leading scientist, opened the door and made them look at him. "Oh?" he said, Jonathan standing up and Kali getting her purse. "Things aren't very pleasant in here, are they?" Neither of them replied to him. "Sorry about that, hospitality's not our strongest suit, with the scientists and all." They figured that long ago. He stepped closer to them, seeing their sharp glares at him and making him just a little uneasy.

He pulled his sleeve away to check the time on his watch. "Okay, well..." He looked up at the two teenagers and asked, "You two up for a little walk? I'll assume you're behind me." He got out of the room, gesturing them to follow him. They both looked at each other before leaving the room with the lead scientist, the girl putting her hand into her purse before getting it out.

"Men of science have created abundant mistakes of every kind," he continued as they walked down the hallway. "George Sarton said that. You two know who he is?" They didn't, him looking away from them. The two teenagers saw a couple soldiers and scientists look at them, making them look away. "It doesn't really matter. The point is, mistakes have been made."

Kali scoffed at that. "Really? Killing my best friend AND trapping my mum in that place were MISTAKES?"

Dr. Owens tried to look reassuring. "Abundant mistakes, the latter not being on me in particular." She guessed he was right, but it didn't excuse that or the former. "The thing is that the men involved with those mistakes, the ones involved with your mom, your sister, and your friend's death..." The dark-haired girl saw a room where a few scientists were testing out a substance. "They're gone and for better or for worse, I'm the schmuck they brought in to make things better, including pardoning your mom." Right, since she did disclose some secrets about the lab. "However, I can't really make things much better without your help."

She scoffed again. "That's another way of saying without us shutting up."

He stopped and looked rather amused by her witty responses. "She's a tough one. You guys been together long?"

The two looked weird to hear him even suggest that they were a couple. "We're not together," they both said almost in-sync.

He didn't reply to that statement and instead asked, "Wanna see what REALLY killed your best friend and what REALLY trapped your mom?" Well, this WILL be her first time seeing it and Jonathan's too, since his mom also went to the Upside Down to save Will...making the two of them feel extra nervous about this.

...

They got into the lower control room, seeing scientists work the machines there. "Hey Teddy," Dr. Owens greeted one of the men going to the hole. "I brought an audience with me, if you don't mind."

"The more, the merrier, sir," the scientist replied. The two teenagers knew one of the former leading men of the facility was named Ted. They guessed "Teddy" was called that so he wasn't associated with him.

The two teens finally looked at the hole that caused all of this. The two looked shocked at how big it was. Its webs looked thicker and there were many white particles floating around there. There were also these...vines from underneath it. God, did it look disgusting and unnerving. "I'd call this one hell of a mistake, would you?" Dr. Owens asked them. That would be, if they were being honest. He nervously chuckled, standing right beside Kali. "See, we can't really erase our mistake here...but we CAN stop it from spreading, like pulling weeds." Jonathan looked at him while Kali kept her eyes on that thing, being in disbelief that her mom actually entered the Upside Down through this...hole.

Jonathan looked back at it as the scientist continued, "But imagine this for a moment: a foreign state, let's say the Soviets..." The two teenagers looked at him. "They hear about our mistake. Think about their reaction. Would they even consider this..." He paused to point at the hole. "A mistake?" The teens looked back at the hole with rather fearsome faces. "They could actually think of replicating that."

Just then, Teddy got into the place the hole was at with a flamethrower and a hazmat suit. The doctor went on, "If we bring more attention to ourselves...then more people like the Hollands would know the truth and then that scenario becomes more likely to come true." He paused for a bit, the three still looking at the hole. "Now you two see why I have to stop the truth from spreading too." He pointed at the hole again. "Like I said, it's like pulling weeds. And we're doing this by any means necessary." When he said that, Teddy began to burn the vines with the flamethrower, screeching being heard from them. Dr. Owens walked behind Jonathan and Kali and asked, "So, do we now understand each other?"

They didn't answer that for a bit, continuing to see the vines of the hole being burned. To be honest with themselves, this would get worse if it was more spread out-hell, they couldn't fathom the thought of this getting outside of this lab...

---

In Hideaway, Terry was nearly done with her shift, it was just forty more minutes. In the pocket of her uniform was a note she wrote while she was on break. It was to Jane and Kali, when she comes back, telling them that she'll be taking extra hours, so they can eat what they want. Those "extra hours" were just going back to Mike and...trying to talk to him again, to make things right so things could be back the way they were again.

The door opened, making her and a couple other waitresses look to see Hopper once again. She was surprised to see him come to this place again. "Hey, Chief," Diane greeted him as he walked right past her.

"Hey," he plainly greeted her back before approaching Terry. He whispered to her, "Listen, I need to talk to you right now."

She looked concerned. "The pumpkins?" she whispered back.

"Worse." That struck her like lightning. What could be worse than those pumpkins?

She looked at one waitress and told her, "Joan, take over for me for a minute, will you?"

"Uh...sure," the waitress replied.

The two got out and to the side of the building. "So what do you mean by 'worse', Jim?"

He shoved his hands into his pockets and said, "I visited Joyce 'cause she was calling to me this morning. Turns out there's something wrong with Will."

Her eyes widened. "What? What's wrong with him?"

"I don't know exactly, but..." He sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose. "See, the kid has episodes."

"I know actually. Joyce told me about it when I shopped for candy on Halloween." He looked surprised. "Not only that, but...did I tell you that she and I saw Will frozen outside of the field yesterday?"

His eyes widened at that. "What?"

So she didn't. It was a rough day yesterday, so... "I met up with Joyce accidentally and we decided to look for our kids. We met up with their friends and then we saw Will completely stiff outside. Jane tried to break him out of it, then Joyce before he snapped out of it." She sighed and rubbed her face. "Is his P.T.S.D. getting worse?"

He shook his head. "I don't think he has post-traumatic stress disorder, Terry." She looked shocked to hear that. "Did Joyce tell you about a drawing he made?"

She began thinking, then remembered one time. "The one where a monster was coming to their home?"

He nodded. "He says he could see that thing, that he could feel him, like he likes being cold."

She looked very worried and crossed her arms. "How does he know that?"

"He just says that he knows, like he has memories that aren't his." That sounded very terrifying, actually, and way beyond her knowledge. "He said that he could feel something growing and spreading and killing. Joyce and I then thought we should make him draw how he feels."

She nodded. "Then what?"

"The drawings somehow connected with each other, so we tried to connect them all with tape."

"You sound like there were a dozen drawings."

He scoffed. "My best guess is over a hundred."

Her eyes widened more. "Over a hundred drawings?!" He nodded. "Jesus..." That meant the severe case of what he was going through.

"We saw that the drawings made these forked lines. I figured that he was drawing vines, which connects back to the pumpkin patch. I think that's why they're rotting." That made sense. What Will was

going through sounded awful though, like he was...possessed.

She sighed and asked, "And you're going there, right?"

He nodded. "Yeah. Take good care of Mike for me, okay?" He was going to leave, but hearing him say that made her worry more. That's why she grabbed his wrist to stop him.

"Wait." He turned to her. "You're going there ALONE?"

He nodded again. "Yeah."

"How long will you be gone?"

He just shrugged. "I dunno." He tried to leave, but she still kept her grip on his wrist...like last year. He gave her a concerned look.

"I'm coming with you."

He sighed. "Terry-"

"We don't know how dangerous these 'vines' can be Jim. You don't need to do this alone. You need someone to watch your back."

He guessed she had a point, but still... "What about Mike or your girls?"

"I can give a note to the girls. Plus, you know I don't come to the cabin until seven."

He remained silent for a moment, looking away from her and thinking about taking her with him. He was just telling her all of this so she would kept up to date. Maybe he would need someone to make sure he gets out of the "vines" before it was too late, but the last time they teamed up to discover something...didn't end well.

"Jim." He looked into her eyes, seeing the determined look in them. She was really adamant about this...

Just like last year.

He sighed and pulled away from her grip. "If you really wanna come

with me, then meet me at Merrill's Farm as soon as you're able, alright?" She just nodded at him before he finally left. He hoped that Terry wouldn't follow through with that...but if there was one thing he learned personally about her, it's that she's one determined woman.

Terry walked back into Hideaway, Joan looking at her and asking, "Am I done?"

She nodded. "Yeah, carry on."

She nodded back at her before then asking, "What were you and the Chief talking about?"

"Things." She then got away from her before she or anyone else ask any more questions about her and him. She just didn't have the patience for their comments right now. She had to come with him. Who knows what these "vines" could do to him?

She had the note and the excuse of coming back to the cabin at seven...wait, how could she even tell the time? She could look at the sky. When the sky becomes dusky, then she and him could leave at that time. It's just to be safe. She hoped that things won't go terribly wrong...and that Will would be alright. Going through something like that must be hard for a kid like him to go through.

---

When the final bell rang in Hawkins Middle, Lucas had walked up to Max to get her to join him and Dustin in finding Dart. However, she was in a rather sour mood, slamming her locker shut and walking away from him, much to his surprise. She just didn't get it. Jane liked her, the rest of the boys liked her, so why the hell was she not allowed to participate in their conversation?! Because she "wouldn't understand"? Wouldn't understand what?! It wasn't like she was a complete dumbass or anything.

When they got out, Lucas said, "Max, hey! Where're you going?! Come on! We need to look for Dart."

"Yeah, good luck with that," she replied bitterly. The black-haired boy stopped for a bit, wondering why she was acting like this. He came



quick to the conclusion though before catching up to her.

"Max, listen, we're all sorry. It's just-"

She stopped and turned to him. "Just what?"

He gulped a little, stopping as well and holding his hands up a little. "Just...like Jane said, you wouldn't understand-"

"Wouldn't understand WHAT?!" She stormed a bit closer to him while shouting that, making him jump a little. He stayed silent for a moment, thinking of how he could explain it to her. "No, wait, let me tell YOU what I don't understand: you and Dustin want me to be in your party and then Jane is fine with me being in it too, but then you guys treat me like shit!"

He looked shocked to hear her say that. "That's NOT true-"

"YES IT IS! You guys just all hide in the AV Club, keeping secrets like we're in second grade or something. Is there seriously something I shouldn't know or what?!"

Lucas didn't answer for a bit, trying to come up with a way to tell her. "It's..." He shook his head. "There are things we can't tell you for your own safety, alright?"

She merely scoffed at that. "For my own safety?"

"YES!" He looked so serious saying that, making her wonder why.

"Because I'm a girl?"

He looked puzzled at her saying that. "Jane's a girl-"

"But she's the exception and I'm not, right?"

He sighed, putting his hands down. "Max-"

"What? Do you guys tell her everything because she doesn't even look like a-"

He finally spat out, "YOU'D THINK WE'RE CRAZY, OKAY?!" She

stiffened at that, her eyes widening at him yelling. He never thought he could snap at her like that, making him sigh again and look guilty. "Max...if I tell you what we can't tell you, you'd think we're nuts. You wouldn't even believe us."

She raised an eyebrow and scoffed again. "Really?"

"REALLY." He still looked serious while saying all of this...

She'd think they're crazy, huh? Since she was from California, crazy could mean a lot of things. She shook her head, sighing. "What do you mean by 'crazy'?"

"EXACTLY what I mean."

She closed her eyes and had her hand move in a circular motion. "Elaborate."

He sighed. "Look, we can't talk about it right now." He looked around to make sure they didn't look suspicious and got closer to her. "Not here." That made her even more baffled and puzzled than before. "Maybe...tomorrow afternoon, if you got time, go to the arcade. I'll tell you everything, okay?"

She scoffed once again at the suggestion. "Last I checked, the arcade's pretty public."

"I'll find a place for us to be alone." God, she never saw anyone be this serious about a secret before. If he was going to do all of this for a probably stupid secret...

She shrugged. "Fine, if I got the time, I'll meet you there." She then backed away before turning and finally walking away from him. "By the way, you still smell!" She then got on her skateboard and skated away.

Did he? He thought it was getting faint. He sniffed himself and looked ashamed, muttering, "Aw, shit..." He then left. He couldn't believe he was doing this, but if Max REALLY wanted to know, then he'll have to tell her if it meant being around her more longer.

Outside of his car waiting for Max was Billy, who had an unlit

cigarette in his hand and saw the African-American boy leave as his step-sister got closer to him. She kick-stopped and grabbed her skateboard, walking towards the car as he got out of her way. When they both got in and buckled up, he asked her, "So, who was that kid?"

She looked at him and answered, "No one."

He didn't look slightly convinced, him scoffing. "No one?" He got out a lighter and placed the cigarette in his mouth, lighting it up.

She sighed heavily and added, "He's just some annoying kid from my class." He dimmed his lighter and sucked in the cigarette, blowing out smoke without a damn of how she would be affected by it.

"Annoying, huh? That why he said something about being crazy?" She looked at him with wide eyes while he put his hand on the window to tap out the ash of the cigarette. "Why was he talking to you?"

She looked away from him when he looked at her and answered, "I-it's just about a stupid assignment."

"Then what? He said he was crazy suddenly?"

She glared daggers at him. "Were you listening?"

He glared daggers at her too, making her feel a little...scared. "Can't exactly ignore a yell like that. He bother you?"

"Why do YOU care?"

He sighed in irritation. "Because you're a piece of shit, Max, but we're family and we're supposed to look out for each other." But were they really? Because brothers aren't supposed to be walking pieces of shit.

The red-haired girl scoffed once more, looking away from him and shrugging a little. She began to sarcastically say, "Jee, what would I ever do without-"

"HEY!" He grabbed her wrist tightly, making her stiff and more scared. He leaned close to her and said in an intimidating voice, "This

is serious shit, Max. I'm older than you, so let me teach you something: there are certain types of people you should stay away from in this world and that kid..." He pulled her closer to him. "...is one of those types, the most dangerous type." She tried to pull from his grip, but he was strong. "You stay away from him, you hear. Stay...away." He then released his grip on her aggressively and started the car.

As they began to drive off, Max tried her best not to cry. Billy was a piece of shit...but he was dangerous to piss off. Not only that...he was also scary, intimidating, like he was a monster. That was who he was to her: not a brother, just a goddamn monster. Now she wondered if she could even go to the arcade the next day...

---

**Done! What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**Yeah, Max still doesn't get invited back to the AV Club and yeah, she's still mad about that. However, I hope you guys don't mind that and know why this is the case.**

**While I was planning out how this season'll go, I came across some crossroads, one of them being whether or not Terry should go to find the tunnels with Hopper. After some pondering, I decided that she should because in this AU, it makes sense for her to look out for him. Hope you guys don't mind that!**

**I also hope you guys didn't mind me writing out the whole scene with Max, Lucas, and Billy. I wouldn't write that if I didn't think it was necessary, considering how a bit different the situation is. I mean, Jane didn't leave her out because she didn't like her and Lucas knows that...**

**Anyways, review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

## 36. We Won't Let Him

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

After she was done with her day job, Terry drove to the house and got out of the car, speed-walking to the door and unlocking it with her key. She quickly got inside, closed the door behind her, locked it, and went up the stairs to her room. Once she was in there, she changed out of her waitress uniform and into an old dark collared shirt, old skinny jeans, and old sneakers since she knew heels were no good against dirt. She then got out the note from the pocket of her uniform and got out of her room to get some tape.

When she did, it being in the basement, she got upstairs and went back to the door, unlocked it, opened it, and taped the note onto there. She decided to keep the garage closed so Jane and possibly Kali would have to go here and read it. She then got outside, closed the door, got into her car, and began driving away to Merrill's farm.

...

Later, Jane finally arrived at her home by her bike. She saw that the garage was closed, so she would have to park her bike at the back, near the basement. However, the note caught her eye, making her stop at the driveway and park her bike there. She walked towards it and took a close look at it. She read to herself, "Girls, I'm going to take some extra hours to earn more money. You two can eat whatever you like until I come back tomorrow morning. I trust you two to take care of yourselves. I love you both, Mama/Mum."

This surprised her, of course, but it also made her feel relieved. She won't have to go through trying to convince her to let her stay at Will's for a bit...well, for more than a bit. She hoped she didn't mind that. She needed to understand that Will needed help.

She ran back to her bike, kicked up the kick-stop, and then rode it to Will's house to support him and see what he's going through.

---

Having a bunch of papers related to Hawkins Labs scattered all over the floor, Mike now sat on the couch and dug through the box. During his search, he had seen a few things about Terry's work there, about her being involved with the subjects and her job with those subjects. There were even a few quotes from her in some articles he's seen.

He pulled out another folder and opening up, the first paper he sees being a news article about Dr. Wheeler and Dr. Brenner being in trouble. He wasn't interested in that, so he was quick to toss that way, then another, then another. He dumped the folder to the floor before reaching his hand into the box again, pulling out a thick red folder now. He tried to read the label as best as he could. It was labelled...

"Ber...tu...zzi...Karen," he read out loud. The fact that this one had a label and it sounded like a name intrigued him, so he opened it up. The first thing he saw was a copy of a news article that was labelled *"Ex-Wife of Top Scientist in D.O.E Sues. Claims He and Fellow Top Scientist Stole Her Children."* That interested him, so he looked at the picture associated with it, seeing a woman with fluffed-out, curly hair and wearing a collared top. That was Karen Bertuzzi. For some reason, he had this weird...feeling about seeing her...like he knew her...but how?

He flipped to another article, seeing its title *"Newborn Son Michael and Young Daughter Nancy stolen, Bertuzzi claims."* His eyes widened when he saw his name there. Was it...referring to him? And then the next name...

"Nan...cy...?" Who was she? Who was Karen?

A clipped-on article got his attention the second he stopped looking at that article. But it wasn't the article in question that caught his eye...it was what's under it. He carefully pulled it out, holding the article down so it wouldn't move. He finally pulled it out and looked at it.

It was a black and white picture of three people...his dad and Karen walking together with Dr. Brenner. Her hair was still the same as the other picture of her depicted, but now she wore a pale long-sleeved

shirt, a pair of jeans, and high heels. She was holding hands with Dr. Wheeler. He looked somber at this. "Dad...Doctor..." He pointed at them both as he said their names. His finger then trailed to the woman. She had to be involved with them personally, right? She was walking with them. And she was holding his hand too...his eyes widened. Could she be...?

He looked up from the picture and looked around for anything that could help him..."visit" her. The TV won't work, so that was out of the question. However, he did spot a radio on the bookshelf, right next to one of the puzzle boxes and spice containers. Radios spew out static, so he got up and walked to it, the picture still in one hand. He grabbed the radio and walked back, sitting on the floor again.

He set the photo on his lap as he turned on the radio and turned its knobs so that it could release static. He had switched from a political talk station to a music station before finally reaching static. He placed the radio next to him and grabbed the photo again. He went to his room to get his blindfold, getting back to where he was and sitting again. He wrapped the blindfold around his eyes to remove his sight before getting the photo again. He then began to try to reach Karen. While he did, he placed the photo on his chest.

He began to take deep breaths, his heart racing for what's about to happen. He had felt very nervous about this, but he was determined to go through with it to see her...to see if she's really...

---

*He was in the darkness once again, immediately seeing a woman in a rocking chair mumbling things. He walked a bit closer to her cautiously, seeing that she had her hair in a messy bun and wore a red nightgown with a brown jacket over it. He heard her mumble, "Four to the right...two to the left..." What did she mean by that?*

*He finally got close, getting right in front of her with wide eyes as she murmured, "Rainbow...four to the right...two to the left..." He saw her eyes closed, like she was dreaming or something. "Rainbow...four to the right...two to the left...four-fifty..." He was shocked by seeing her like this. What was she doing? Why was she like this?*

*Her eyes then finally opened, looking into Mike's wide ones. He tensed up,*

*his breathing becoming uneven and his anxiety rising. Does she really know him? Could she recognize him?*

*Her face was shifting a little like she was going to react, but was holding it back somehow. Her mouth was open before she finally said, "My dear Michael." He gasped at that. She called him her dear Michael...so that meant...*

*He gulped and got a little closer to her, saying, "Mom...?" He couldn't believe it. Karen Bertuzzi was his mother...he thought she was gone. Terry and Jim told him she was gone...*

*He reached his hand to touch hers and he was, only for a second, feeling his heart tingle. However, she suddenly began to disappear into dust, much to his shock. "Mom?!" He tried to grab the dust, but it was no use...*

*She was gone.*

*But she couldn't be. He just found her...*

*"MOM!" He looked around, trying to find her anywhere. "MOM! MOM, WHERE ARE YOU?!" He began to cry when he couldn't see her. "MOM?!" He wiped the tears off of his face, continuing to cry her name...*

---

*Even in reality, with his nose bleeding.*

*"MOM?! MOM?! WHERE ARE YOU, MOM?!" he cried out in agony. "MOM?!" He removed his blindfold, his eyes watering as he began to cry more. He just lost his mom...he found her...but he lost her...just when he wanted to touch her.*

*He sniffled and covered his face with his hands as he continued to cry and sob. "Mom..." At least one thing was for certain...his mom wasn't gone, unlike what Jim and Terry told him...leaving him to be more upset and angered at them than before.*

*He needed to find her...now.*

---

*Finally arriving at the Byers's home, Jane parked her bike and went up to the door, knocking it and shouting, "Hello?!" There was no*



answer yet. She was panting. "Will?! Mrs. Byers?!" She then heard some footsteps before hearing the door unlock. Joyce herself opened it up and greeted Jane with her best friendly smile at the moment.

"Hey, Jane..." she greeted her with her kind voice, despite seeing her worried face.

"Is Will here?"

She knew she was there for Will. Why else would she come here? However...

The brunette looked back before looking at her with a sad voice. "You know what, sweetie? Now's not the time to see him." As if the tomboy wasn't worried enough about him...

"Is he okay?"

She could hear the complete worry in her voice, making the woman's heart crumble a little, as if it wasn't already. She sighed and went forward to gently push her back. "Listen to me, he's just not...feeling well." She closed the door and gently held her arm. "He's laying down, so I'll tell him that you stopped by, okay?" She forced a smile. "I mean, it's really kind of you to do so, but you should go back home." The girl's lips drew to a line as the woman got back to the door and opened it, realizing what was happening.

As the woman was about to close the door, she stepped forward and asked, "Is it about the shadow monster?" Joyce looked shocked to hear her say that, making her open the door again and look at her. "If it is, I know. He told me about it." She was completely baffled by this. He told Jane about that? He did trust her...but to hear her say it... "What's going on with him, Mrs. Byers? What did it do to him?"

Now that she's hearing her say this, it would be stupid of her not to let her in and see him.

---

Terry finally arrived at the farm, looking for any sign of Jim. She had slowed down her car when she saw a pile of dirt slowly but surely piling up before seeing his car near that. She decided to get off of the

road and drive to that, stopping next to his car and parking her car there. She looked around, seeing the rotting pumpkins and the flies around them, grossing her out a little. When she got out, she heard him say, "Terry?" She walked forward and saw him digging himself a small crater, her eyes growing large at that.

"Jesus, Jim..." she said in shock.

He chuckled a bit, shoving the tip on the ground and leaning on the shovel. "Well, I think these 'vines' are underground, so we have to dig for them." He tilted his head towards his car. "Another shovel's in the trunk. I unlocked it in case you actually came."

She scoffed. "Of course I'm going to come. I told you that you need someone to watch your back." She then walked to the trunk of his car to get the other shovel. The smile he had disappeared. He really did hope that she wouldn't come, but now that he thought about it, it wouldn't be Terry if she really left him alone to do this. What a woman.

She came back with the extra shovel and tried to carefully get down into the crater with Jim. However, she slipped, making him drop his shovel and rush to catch her. "Whoa!" he cried out as he caught her with his arm. She kind of blushed at his action. "You alright?"

She nodded, smiling a little as she straightened up. "Yeah, thanks, Jim." He smiled back at her, the two admiring each other for a second before they finally began digging to find the "vines".

---

Kali and Jonathan were now being escorted out of the Lab by the man that offered them a "lift" back at the park. When they reached his car, they all stopped, the man giving the male teen his keys. "Have a nice day," he told them. They then departed, the teens getting back into the car and buckling up. Jonathan used his keys to start up the engine. Unlike before, it actually started up. They both looked relieved at that as they finally drove away from the Lab.

...

As they continued driving, the Indian girl reached into her purse and

got out a walk-man. She played the tape, hearing Dr. Owens speak. She decided to forward it a little before playing it again. *"It doesn't really matter. The point is, mistakes have been made."* She forwarded it again before playing it. *"The thing is that the men involved with those mistakes, the ones involved with your mom, your sister, and your friend's death...they're gone-"* She scoffed before forwarding it for a bit before playing another part. *"See, we can't really erase our mistake here...but we CAN stop it from spreading, like pulling weeds."* A smirk slowly grew on her face as she forwarded the tape a little and played, kind of amusing Jonathan. *"If we bring more attention to ourselves...then more people like the Hollands would know the truth."* She forwarded it and played it once more. *"Now you two see why I have to stop the truth from spreading too. Like I said, it's like pulling weeds. And we're doing this by any means necessary. So, do we now understand each other?"*

Her smirk turned into a full on grin, making Jonathan do the same as well. "You're enjoying this a bit too much," he bluntly told her, his voice of amusement.

She looked at him and raised an eyebrow. "Really? I'm just happy that we're finally going to burn that lab to the ground."

He chuckled a little. "As it deserves."

She looked forward at the road. "Definitely."

They finally drove by the sign that said "Leaving Hawkins - Come Again Soon". Of course they needed to leave Hawkins. After all, they couldn't exactly do this by themselves...

---

It was getting late, the sky turning bright orange. The small crater Jim and Terry were in was now bigger, the dirt pile from before becoming bigger. They were both sweating due to the work it was taking. The woman looked up at the sky, thinking that they haven't gotten much time left before they have to leave. However, as she dug the tip of her shovel into the dirt, she heard a squelching sound. She looked down, holding up the pile of dirt and tossing it away...some of it sticking to it. The spot she dug at looked sticky as well. "Jim, look."

"I see it..." he replied as he walked to it. "Must be it." She had to agree

with him. The ground couldn't be that moist, even deep underground.

She dug her shovel into the spot and grunted when she tried to pull it up. This seemed more tougher than she thought. This led the man to drop his own shovel and help her pull it up, getting behind her and grabbing the pole of the shovel with her. They both then pulled it up, hearing more squelching and seeing some sticky blue substance. "What the hell...?" What WAS that?

She and him were panting, Jim offering, "Let me." He offered his hand, so she gave him the shovel as he began to poke into the hole to make it bigger. More squelching was heard, much to Terry's disgust, but then the hole got bigger and the dirt began to fall through. This really must be it then...

This was one of the "vines".

The police chief looked at the dirty-blond-haired woman and told her, "Get the rope from the trunk. I'm going in." She nodded before climbing her way out of the crater and going to the car. He looked into the hole, continuing to pant. He felt very...anxious about this. Who knows what the hell's in there...? But whatever's there, he had to brace himself for it.

She got back with the rope, him holding one end and then Terry saying, "Be careful, okay?"

He appreciated her concern, so he smiled at her again. "I'll try." He then descended into the hole, the woman holding onto the other end of the rope as he got down. She heard him land on the ground and pull out something, a flashlight, maybe. She then heard him mutter, "Oh Jesus..." That didn't sound good. As much as she wanted to look down and see what he was seeing, she couldn't risk it. She had to be here so Hopper could get pulled back up.

Wait...could she even have the strength to pull him back up?

Shit, she guessed neither of them thought about that...

---

In the Byers home that evening, while Joyce was trying to solve the

puzzle without Jim, Jane was with Will in his room, the two talking about what was going on with him. He managed to wear a shirt because he couldn't fathom being half-naked in front of her, but was sweating through it. "I-it's like...I can feel what the shadow monster is feeling..." he told her, not even looking at her as she looked around his room for the drawings he made that ranged around the whole house. "See...what he sees."

She looked at him with a completely worried look. "Like...in the Upside Down?" she asked.

He nodded. "Y-yes...some of him is there." Wait, SOME of him? "But...some of him is here too."

That didn't sound good. "Like, here, in this house?"

"In this house and..." He gulped. "In me." She gasped, sitting right next to him now. "It's like...like he's trying to reach out into Hawkins...more and more. A-and the more he spreads..." He looked down, his voice sounding hurt and cracking a little. "The more connected to him I feel..."

She frowned, looking absolutely sorry for him. "And the more you see these 'now-memories'."

He gulped again. "A-at first...I just felt it at the back of my head." He touched the back of his head to add a visual. "I didn't even know it was there." He put his hand back to his side. "I-it's like...having a dream and not remembering it until you try to think really hard about it. I-it was like that." He began to shake a little, his eyes becoming watery and Jane's heart feel like it dropped. "B-but now it's like I remember...all the time."

Jane deeply sighed, thinking that he was possessed by the shadow monster. God, that was terrible. He didn't deserve this. How was this going to be handled? She didn't know exactly how he behaved...but Will did, making her think of something.

"Will?"

He still didn't look at her, but replied, "Yes?"

She took a deep breath. "I'm thinking of something, something that would make us stop the shadow monster."

He looked at her, his face pleading. "Wh-what is it?"

She looked at his face, seeing that he was near tears. She tried to bury the heavy sadness that was in her and answered, "You could be a spy."

He looked puzzled. "A-a spy?"

She nodded. "Yeah, a super-spy. If you can feel what he feels and see what he sees, then maybe we'll find a way to stop him. I mean..." She looked around at the vine drawings. "This all can't be happening for no reason, right?"

He had to agree with her there. To be honest with himself, this couldn't be happening without some kind of reason. "Y-you really think so, Jane?"

She nodded. "Yeah." Even though he was like this, even though this was happening, she remained hopeful...maybe he should too...

But then he looked at his drawing of the shadow monster, making her do the same as well. "Wh-what if he finds out we're spying on him? What if he spies back..?"

Jane was stubborn, thinking that he couldn't be that smart. She looked at him once again. "He won't, Will."

"H-how do you know?"

She then grabbed his hand, making him look at her with wide eyes again. "We won't let him, okay? You and I'll make sure of it." His heart began to thump hard, not because of this situation...but because of her supporting him while he was like this. Plus, she was right...he wouldn't spy on them if they wouldn't let him. Jane was so smart to think of this idea, so kind to help him like this...she was always there to support him in tough situations. He always appreciated it, like now.

He let out some tears and hugged her, making her hug back as he

sobbed and sniffled. "Th-thank you so much, Jane..."

She smiled a little. "You're welcome, Will." What wouldn't she do to help her friend?

---

As Hopper walked around in the "vine", Terry waited for him, still holding onto the rope. She looked up at the sky and saw it was dusk. She sighed, knowing that she had to call to him to get back.

She shouted into the hole, "Jim! Come back here! It's time for us to go!" She didn't hear a reply, making her worry. "Jim?! Can you hear me?!" She could then hear some faint grunting and coughing, making her worry even more. "Jim?! Is that you?!"

...

The man's sight was becoming hazy and he could barely hear Terry's voice. He felt like he could throw up and pass out like he was having a hangover. He must make it...for her...

...

"Jim, answer me!" She then heard a thud, making her gasp. Did he...? No, he couldn't be. "Oh my God..." She looked around, trying to think of what she could do. She knew she couldn't just go down there and carry him up, but she also knew she couldn't just leave him or even find a nearby phone booth to call the authorities...

Suddenly, she heard some squelching again, making her look to see the hole...repair itself fast. She gasped and scrambled to get a shovel. She then tried to shred through the vines with it, but it was no use. It repaired itself. She gritted her teeth and muttered, "Goddamn it!" She tried to dig through at it, but it was even more tougher to pull up than before. She tried her best, grunting as her arms began to tire out from it. She then just let go and panted. She couldn't just give up now, especially when Jim was trapped in there!

She grabbed the shovel again and began to poke it like he did earlier, aggressively. She was getting tired, but she had to pull through for him. She couldn't just leave him in there all alone! She promised that

she'd watch his back.

After what felt like forever, she finally shredded through the vines and opened the hole up again. She dropped her shovel and went on her knees, grabbing the sides of the hole and carefully putting her head down through it. She saw...what she saw in the Upside Down last year: white particles floating everywhere, everything being lit by a blue light, and the atmosphere being both chilling and disgusting. Jim was right... "Jesus Christ..." She never thought she had to look at this again, but here she was.

She looked around to see Jim unconscious, his flashlight and hat dropped on the floor. She gasped at the sight of that, leaning more forward carefully. "Jim?" she called out to him. He didn't even flinch. "Jim! Wake up!" There was still no kind of response from him.

She huffed and muttered, "Damn it." Suddenly, she felt her hands slip from the sides and then she suddenly fell through the hole. She landed on her head hard, making her scream and place a hand on it. She grunted at the pain as she slowly began to stand up, her sight a little hazy due to her fall. She rubbed her forehead and looked up, seeing the hole try to repair itself again. That made her gasp and yell, "NO!" But it was too late for her to do anything.

The hole repaired itself once again and now she was left alone with Jim in this..."vine".

She had tried to pull the rope the hole repaired itself on, but it didn't seem to budge. It was like it was embedded into the vines. "Shit..." How were they ever going to come back up for Mike?! What would she even tell the girls?! HOW would she even go back home now?! She'll need to find a way...

She and Hopper will find the way.

She turned and ran to the unconscious man, shaking him a little and saying, "Jim...Jim, wake up." She lightly slapped his face a little. "Come on, stay with me, Jim!" There was still no type of response from him, making her throat feel swelled. She knew he was unconscious because of what happened down here, but she wouldn't give up. He had to still be alive...right? "JIM!"



---

Stopping here. What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?

Yay! I managed to release this chapter two days after the last! I hope you guys didn't mind me writing the opening scenes of the next episode here. The chapter was too short to release with just the rest of the episode.

Anyways, let's talk about stuff...

Poor Mike...finding his mom even though he was told that she was gone...

I always figured that Kali would have more fun trying to expose the lab than Nancy in canon, so I wrote her being that way.

Poor Will...he deserves so much better. Thankfully, his crush friend is there to support him all the way!

Now Terry is trapped inside the tunnels with Hopper...oops. She was also pretty adamant about saving Hopper. I always figured that the vines would be slippery, so that's why she fell in there. Really, I don't think there's much else she could do when Hopper's trapped in there...

Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

## 37. I'm Here Now

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

Parking near a motel, Jonathan and Kali got out with their bags. He opened the door, letting her in before him. As the door closed behind them, they looked around. Since it was a motel, it looked pretty cheap with the lighting and the setting, not that it looked badly cheap. The two arrived at the front desk, seeing an older woman eating takeout and looking at a magazine. They looked at one sign that read, *Ring the bell for a room*. Kali decided to do so, ringing the bell and hoping to get the lady's attention. Weirdly, she didn't. It was as if she cared.

They both looked weirded-out at each other before looking at her again, the girl asking, "Hey, m'am, can we get a room?"

"We got those," the desk lady replied plainly, still eating her takeout and reading her magazine. "You wanna single..." She then looked at them. "Or a double?"

They looked weird again and answered in-sync, "Double." There seemed to be no doubt in their voices when they answered that...

...

In a room, they were in their pajamas and sitting on their own beds, their blankets over them and the two being quiet and looking around awkwardly. Finally, after what felt like forever, Jonathan grinned and said, "Kali?"

She looked at him, crossing her arms. "Hmm?"

"I've been thinking of something."

"What?"

"How we would always team up to fight against something."

She began to chuckle at that. "Now that you mention it, we do. First,

it was the Demogorgon..."

He looked at her, keeping his grin and also chuckling. "Now it's Hawkins Lab."

Now she giggled. "We killed a monster and now we're gonna kill the Lab's reputation."

"In a way...we're like a couple of vigilantes."

She kept her grin. "Two teenagers fighting for justice, even if it meant breaking the law..." Her grin softened a bit as well as his. Her lips then went to a flat line. "First, it was for Barbara's death and Will being in the Upside Down..." His grin disappeared as well when she said that. "Now it's to make sure they weren't in vain."

He nodded. "Yeah..." Those bastards never really apologized for having his little brother be stuck there anyway.

She looked away from him, looking down at her blanket. "I hope things go well tomorrow. I'd hate it if those bastards know what we've done."

He frowned and shifted himself a little. "Hey." She looked at him again. "They wouldn't know. You were very discreet about recording them."

She shrugged, remembering the camera in the room. "Was I?"

He reached his hand over to her and held her shoulder. "If they knew we were recording them, they would've intercepted us again. They haven't because they don't know. They'll never know."

She guessed he was right. Maybe that could be passed off as a sign of nervousness. She hoped it did anyway. She gave him a friendly smile and said, "Maybe."

He smiled back at her as he released his hold from her shoulder. "Hold onto that thought, okay?" He knew he was. He couldn't think of the worst now, thanks to hanging out with Steve. He and Kali couldn't look that suspicious since they allowed themselves to be caught.

Kali spotted the scar from his hand, continuing to smile. "You still have that?"

Jonathan looked a bit puzzled. "What?"

"The scar."

He realized what she was talking about, laughing a little. "Oh, yeah." He put his scarred palm on the drawer, showing it off on the light the lamp emitted. "You still got yours?"

She nodded as she put her scarred palm next to his. She laughed at the difference between the two. "Mine's bigger. Who knew?"

He chuckled and said, "Congratulations."

"Thanks." They then got their hands off of the cabinet, the Indian girl thinking of something else she just realized now. She laid her head against the pillow and asked, "Jonathan?"

He did the same, replying, "Yeah?"

"Back then, I kinda figured you'd disappear because you were a loner."

He chuckled once again. "I would, to be honest with you, but..." He shook his head. "I like hanging out with you, Kali."

She smiled at him. "You do?"

He nodded at her. "Yeah. You seem to be more friendly than I thought you'd be."

She raised an eyebrow. "Really?"

"Really. You also seem to be a bit badass too, so..." They both laughed. Kali did have to admit, she kind of was. She would never be the way she is now if it weren't for...well, the things that happened.

"Well, you seem to be pretty down-to-earth and mature."

He nodded once again. "Yeah."

"Except the time you beat my boyfriend's face into a pulp."

He shot up at that, pointing at her and having wide eyes. "Hey, he said some unnecessary shit, okay?"

She nodded, her smile disappearing. "I know, and he apologized for it."

"Thank God." He laid back down, looking up at the ceiling. "Took me a while to get used to him." She giggled at that, making him do the same. After a bit of silence, he then asked, "Why didn't you want Steve to be involved in this?" She sighed and looked up at the ceiling with him. She did want Steve to be out of this, but why...? She didn't know, much to her surprise. "Is it because of the rumors?"

She scoffed. "That's a problem on its own, but..." She trailed off, trying to think of the reason why she didn't want Steve to be involved. She finally reached to a conclusion and answered, "I guess I just wanted to protect him."

Jonathan looked at her weird. "Protect him?"

"I mean, he did help us fight against the Demogorgon last year, but..." She paused, shrugging again. "I don't know, I just...I just don't want him to be involved, for his own safety."

Huh. Usually, it would be the boyfriend that would protect his girlfriend, but knowing Kali, he shouldn't be surprised to hear this from her. She was different from other girls, after all. He decided to sarcastically ask, "So, you wanted to protect your boyfriend by not letting him get into this, but it's absolutely fine to bring ME along?"

She scoffed, looking at him once again. "Come on, we've both worked together and went through hell before he even came by. I trust you enough to do the same again. You wouldn't be here otherwise."

He thought she had a point there, a point he can't even argue against because it was true. "I guess." After a bit more silence, he reached to the light switch and said, "Night, Kali."

"Night, Jonathan," she replied. He turned off the light and the two began to fall asleep, hoping their plan will come well the next day.

---

Now being morning, everything was quiet in the Byers home...until Will suddenly woke up with a loud gasp and heavy breathing. That woke up Jane, who was sleeping on the floor in a sleeping bag. She yawned and looked up at him, worried. "Will?" she asked. "What's the matter?" He looked at her with wide eyes, trembling at what he saw.

"J-Jane..." he managed to say to her before gulping. "I saw them."

She sat up, emerging out of her sleeping bag in concern. "Them?"

The boy knew she wasn't going to like what he was going to say. "H-Hopper and..." He gulped again. "Your mom."

Her eyes widened at that, now standing up. "What?"

"I-I think they're in trouble..."

She looked puzzled. "W-wait, what are you talking about?" Her mom wrote that she was only taking extra hours...

"I...I saw them, Jane...they're together."

She felt so aghast to hear this. There was no way, her mom, she...actually, she remembered her mom asking her if she saw something strange. Maybe...maybe she left the note to go investigate whatever was happening, with Hopper...again. "Wh-where are they...?"

He didn't answer for a bit, then said, "S-somewhere...dangerous." Her blood ran cold at those words, now breathing as heavily as he did as she looked down at her feet. Her mom...being somewhere dangerous with Hopper.

He felt worse than he did for telling her that since she became this way at this piece of news. He just wanted to...comfort her in some way. "I-I think..." She looked up at him, making him feel warm...even though "he" didn't like it warm. "They could survive if they...hold out for a long time." That made her sigh in relief, making him feel a little better now.

"Alright, come on, we need to tell your mom this." He nodded as he

slowly got off of the bed and walked with Jane to his mom, who was in the living room, focused on piecing his drawings together. The boy grabbed his mother's shoulder and shook her a little. "Mom...Mom."

She broke her concentration and looked up at him with a smile. "Oh hi, sweetheart," she greeted him. "What's going on?"

He and Jane continued to look solemn as he replied, "I saw them."

Her smile disappeared. "Saw who, baby?"

"Hopper...and Ms. Ives." She looked both shocked and puzzled at him saying both of their names.

"What...?" How did he see both the man she slowly began to care for and her dear friend since high school? And why were they together again?

"They're in a dangerous place...we need to find them." He was so serious saying this. She looked over at Jane, who looked away and had a saddened expression on her face. It must have hurt her to find out that her mother was in a dangerous place...

But...how were they going to "find" them?

---

Terry had tried to wake up Jim, but it was no use. She still didn't give up on the possibility that he was just unconscious, but she was getting tired. That was why she was sleeping against the wall in a sitting position, being near him. His loud gasp made her begin to stir from her sleep. He tried to regain his breathing, feeling sweaty...and nauseous.

As he tried to stand up, the woman finally opened her eyes, seeing him do so before also feeling a little nauseous too. She gasped and rushed to help him up. "Jim!" she exclaimed as she tried to get him back up on his feet. He coughed out some black bile, the woman still supporting him. "Don't worry, I gotcha."

When he got a hold of himself and finally stood, he looked down at her, being surprised to see her down here. "T...Terry...?" he asked.

She nodded before hugging him. "I'm so glad you're alright."

He was glad he was too, but there was the matter of HER being down here. "How the hell did you get down here...?"

She released the hug and sighed, crossing her arms. "When I heard you grunting and coughing, I looked down and saw that you were unconscious. I accidentally slipped through and..." She deeply sighed again, grabbing her sleeves tightly in shame. "I fell down here. The hole repaired itself and I couldn't use the rope." Her throat began to swell and her eyes about to water, the woman feeling ashamed. "I'm so sorry..."

The man frowned before returning the hug she gave before. "Hey, don't be. You were looking out for me. It was an accident." She sniffled before letting out a sob, the two holding each other tight for a bit. At least they were alright...for now.

They released the hug as Terry's nausea increased. She coughed, covering her hand for a bit. Jim instantly held her shoulder as she suddenly got to the ground and threw up the same black bile he did. She spat out the rest and wiped her lips. "Shit..." She never experienced this when she was in the Upside Down...but she WAS wearing a hazmat suit. She wasn't now.

"It's okay, it's okay," he whispered to her, realizing what this meant from him being sprayed by...whatever the hell sprayed at him to the black bile. "You went to the Upside Down in a hazmat suit, right?"

She nodded, trying to regain her composure. "Y-yes."

"That means that we shouldn't breathe this."

She looked up at him. "Well, how are we going to cover our faces?"

He instantly thought of something before handing her his flashlight. "Hold this and shine it to my arm."

She did so with a concerned look. "Why?" She then saw him pull out his knife and cut his sleeve off with it. "What the hell are you doing?"

"Creating a mask."



"With JUST your sleeve?"

"What else is available, Terry?" She sighed, guessing that he had a point. In fact, since she was wearing an old shirt...

When he finally ripped off his sleeve, he wrapped it around his mouth and went for the other one for Terry, but was stopped by her saying, "Wait, hand me the knife." He gave her a concerned look, but hers was now stern. "Please, Jim."

He sighed before giving it to her and getting back his flashlight. "You gonna do the same?"

"Of course, now shine that light to my left arm." He did so and she proceeded to cut the sleeve.

"You know you're going to destroy that shirt."

"I doubt you were thinking that when you did it." That made him chuckle, something he never thought he'd do in a situation like this. "Besides, this is an old shirt. I can afford to destroy it." It made sense since they were getting themselves dirty by digging earlier.

When she was done cutting her sleeve, she tried to rip off with the help of Jim, then wrapped it around her mouth as tightly as she could. They both finally looked at each other, him saying, "Let's find a way outta this place."

She nodded. "Right." The two then walked to the open path.

...

Later, as the two continued to walk, they saw two open paths before them, making them stop and look at them. They began thinking of what to do, Terry coming to a conclusion. "Maybe we should split up," she suggested to the man.

He shook his head. "I'm the one that has a light source, Terry," he told her. "We need to stay together." She sighed, but knew he was right. Without the flashlight, this "vine" would be dim to the eyes, barely having any light.

"Well, you got a preference?"

He looked at the left and right open paths a few times before shining the left path and answering, "We'll take this one first, see if there's a way out from there." Now with the flashlight on one hand, he reached into his pocket and got out a pack of cigarettes, handing it to the woman. "You rip a small part of the cigarettes and drop them on the ground every few steps, alright? We'll need to come back here when there's no way out from there."

She knew that made sense, so she nodded at him. "Okay."

He took a deep breath. "Alright...let's go." And just like that, they began walking the left path. Terry did what Jim told her to do: ripping a small part of a cigarette and dropping it at every few steps. They both held onto the hope that they will get the hell out of there and reach up to surface level. After all, they got things to do...like taking care of a certain boy and for Terry, taking care of Jane.

Oh Jane...the mother hoped she will be alright. Maybe she'll be hanging out with friends today. Still, she had to come back, for her and Kali when she comes back.

---

A truck drove at the edge of Hawkins, slowly stopping when the driver saw a mailbox with the address "515 Larrabee" on it. When the truck came to a complete stop, he said, "Alright, buddy, I think this is it. 515 Larrabee, right?" He looked at the boy in the passenger's seat...the boy being Michael. Today, he wore yet another multi-colored, collared shirt, a plain blue jacket over it, sandy-colored pants, and a pair of sneakers. He also had a bag with him, a bag he found while exploring the cabin.

He nodded a little and answered, "Yes. Five-fifteen."

The man chuckled. "Okay, five-fifteen."

He kind of smiled at him and unbuckled himself before opening the door and saying, "Thanks, sir."

When he got out, the driver said, "Hey." The freckled boy looked up

at him once more, seeing his friendly face. "You apologize to your mom, alright? She must be scared half to death." Mike thought she probably was until yesterday. "How long has it been?"

He didn't need to think much to answer with, "Too long." He then closed the door and got down to the ground, the truck driving away. He watched it drive away before looking at the mailbox. 515 Larrabee...he knew he had the right address, he saw it when he tried to find out where she lived in the darkness...so why was he feeling so nervous about this? Was it because he was finally going to see his mother for the first time in his life?

Maybe it was, but he had to be strong. He had to push that nervousness back so nothing could go wrong.

He faced the leaf-covered path before him and began to walk straight down to the home.

...

After a couple minutes, he finally saw the home, being surprisingly nice-looking for a house in the woods. He walked onto the porch and stopped in front of the door. He took a deep breaths, trying his best to relax and not get nervous about this. He saw the doorbell and pressed it to ring it. He heard the ringing in the home, as well as some muffled voices. He looked puzzled. Was Karen not alone?

The curtain of the door rose up to reveal Nick looking at him through the glass. Mike froze up a little at his stare. He saw him roll his eyes and hear him groan, dropping the curtain and saying something muffled to the other people. The boy wondered why he did that, so he decided to knock on the door. That made the man yell, "Hey, go away!" Mike froze up at that again. The man sounded hostile...was this really his mom's home?

After some more muffled talks, he heard the door unlock and it opened. It revealed Giana dressed like a housewife with a clothed, dark-blond-haired baby sitting on her arm and sucking his fist, possibly being her son. She looked at Mike and said, "Listen, sweetie, we don't mean any harm, but we don't have time to deal with your school's fundraiser."

He gave her a puzzled look. "Fundraiser?"

"Or your 'word of God'. Whatever you want from us or whatever you're selling us, we're not interested, okay? I'm sorry."

As she was closing the door with her free hand, he shouted, "Wait!" However, she closed the door and locked it, the muffled talking happening once again. He sighed deeply. He knew this was the house, despite hearing strangers. If they weren't going to let him in...then he'll do so himself.

He tilted his head down and focused on the door, using his power to unlock it.

...

Inside, Giana went to Nick and said, "I think I made him go away."

He sighed in relief. "Good. You were always better at shooin' people than I am."

She giggled a little before handing her son to him. "Take Caleb to the kitchen so he could eat, okay?" He nodded as he held him with his arm and her husband and his wife appeared before them.

"Who was at the door, honey?" Nick's wife asked him.

He looked at her and answered, "Just some damn kid, Jen."

"Hey." Giana gave him a stern look since he swore in front of Caleb.

He chuckled a little and said, "Sorry."

"You did get him away though, right?" Giana's husband asked.

She turned to him and answered, "Yes, John. He should be away by now-" Suddenly, they all heard the door suddenly unlocking. They all looked both shocked and scared, wondering what the hell was happening. The door then opened up, revealing Mike with his head still tilted down and his nose bleeding. Who the hell was...

"Where is my mom?" he asked them sternly. They all looked puzzled.

His mom...? What was he...

Suddenly, Nick and Giana came to the same conclusion after what they've seen him do, the two looking at each other with wide eyes.

...

They led the boy to the living room, him hearing the TV play a game show. Nick and Giana stopped near the doorway with their spouses, the two of them looking solemn while Caleb was still sucking his fist and not knowing what was going on. "Here she is, sweetie..." Giana said to Mike, her head tilting towards the room. He looked in there and...finally saw Karen...finally saw his mom. She was still in her rocking chair and still wore her night gown, but now wore a white sweater over it and still had on her pink slippers. Her hair was also still in a messy bun. She was watching the TV, murmuring things under her breath. The boy felt his throat swell. It was her...it was really her...

"Good luck," Nick told him before leaving to put Caleb in his stroller in the kitchen.

He gulped and slowly walked into the room, asking, "Mom?"

As he got closer to her, he heard her murmuring, "Four to the right...two to the left. Breathe...sunflower...rainbow." She was still looking at the TV like she didn't even know he was there, making him worry.

"Mom, can you hear me?"

"Four-fifty...breathe. Four to the right...two to the left."

The boy's eyes began to water, still seeing his own mother murmuring things and watch the TV. When he got close to her, he knelt down, looking sentimental. "Mom...it's me...Michael." He then held her hand as Nick came back. "I'm here now." Karen stopped murmuring and finally looked at Michael, making his breath hitch and having him feel a flurry of emotions. It was just like when he visited her in the darkness...it was the same look.

However, she said in a loud voice,

"Breathe...sunflower...rainbow...four-fifty." He looked so baffled at that. Why was she saying that stuff?

Hearing and seeing all of that, Nick and Giana looked heartbroken, the woman about to cry before John pulled her into a hug. Jen also hugged Nick to make him feel better. So it was really him...it was really Michael...

He looked back at them and asked sadly, "What's wrong with my mom?" Nick tried his best not to cry while Giana released a sob. How were they going to explain it to him...?

---

Awake and out of the motel now, Jonathan and Kali drove to their destination, the car radio blasting a rock song. The Indian girl kind of moved her head at the beat of the song, much to Jonathan's bit of amusement.

They finally arrived at what looked like a rather dirty and unkempt building with vines growing around it and a bunch of junk lying around. Jonathan stopped the car and looked at Kali, asking in concern, "You sure this is the right place?"

She got out the business card she had before looking at the number of the building. "This is 3833," she answered before scoffing. "What a shithole." He chuckled before removing the keys and the two unbuckling themselves. They got out of the car and walked straight to the door on the junkier side of the building. It had "Keep Door Closed" spray-painted in red on it.

Jonathan rang the doorbell, the two wincing when they heard the shrill buzzing it made. After it stopped, a man's voice through a speaker demanded, "*Look at the camera.*" They both looked puzzled, looking around to find the camera.

"What camera?" Kali muttered as her friend tried to ask him that through the loudspeaker.

"*Not the loudspeaker, genius. Above you, at the right.*" Jonathan huffed as he and Kali looked up at the camera. So that's where it was...

The two tensed up a little when they heard the door unlock and open. Murray Bauman was shown, wearing a red, black, and yellow robe, a white tank top underneath, dark baggy pants, and a pair of slippers. He looked at the two plainly, greeting in a rather condescending voice, "Kali Ives, Jonathan Byers. You two are a long way from home." They looked pretty surprised at him knowing who they were. He stepped aside and gestured for them to come in, the teens doing so. After a few seconds of looking out, Murray closed the door.

...

He opened the fenced gate to what looked like his living room, the three entering inside as the teens looked around. It was all untidy, but what did they expect from someone like him? "Well..." he began to say. "I hope you two didn't come ALL the way here to talk about the bear in the Harrington kid's backyard." He turned to them with a smartass grin. "I've heard that story already." They both knew it wasn't a bear, but it wasn't like they were going to tell Murray that anyway.

He continued walking along, the two teens following him once again.

...

Through what looked like his personal library, he slide-opened a door to his office. The two looked with concern as they all entered inside. They saw many pictures, notes, and news articles hung up, strings attaching some. They knew he was an investigator, but a conspiracy theorist? Jeez. "Go ahead, take a look, don't be shy," he told them. They both walked closer to the wall, Kali looking at the part concerning Barbara in particular. "I followed up on 200 tips, most being bogus, but that's how these things go along, alright? I know every step Barbara took that day and every last person she talked to. The answer to what happened to your best friend should be up here somewhere. I just gotta connect the right dots."

He sounded so confident about that, making Kali scoff and cross her arms. "The timeline's wrong," she told him.

He actually looked surprised about that. "Sorry?"

She smirked and looked back at him. "The timeline you set up is wrong." He looked a little offended at that.

"Also, the boy with the buzz-cut?" Jonathan added, pointing at a drawing of Mike from last year. "He's not Russian."

Kali nodded. "Yep, he's from Hawkins Lab. From what I can remember, he's called Michael Eleven, or M11 for short." Murray looked even more surprised and baffled than before.

Jonathan smirked and said, "You might wanna sit down for this." Perhaps he should...

---

**Stopping here. What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes?**

**I WAS going to post this yesterday, but yesterday was my 18th birthday, so I was busy. Had fun though and got some new stuff like a new laptop since my old one was breaking down!**

**But I digress...**

**I liked writing the friendly dialogue between Kali and Jonathan. It gives a little more to their friendship. :)**

**So originally with the scene with Hopper and Terry, I had them split up. But then I remembered that Hopper the one with the only light source because the Upside Down is supposed to be a very dim place, so I made them go through one path together.**

**Poor Mike...and poor Nick and Giana too, seeing their nephew even though they were told that he was miscarried...**

**I always figured Kali would be more confident when it comes to correcting people, so I added that little characterization for her.**

**Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**



## 38. Home?

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Billy's sports car drove and stopped near the arcade, Max unbuckling herself and getting out. "Listen, if you don't come back in an hour-

"I'm walking home, yeah, I know," she replied snappingly as she grabbed her skateboard.

"Hey!" She froze and looked at her scary stepbrother. "Watch the attitude, shithead." She huffed and slammed the door, Billy driving away and her flipping him off as he went. Piece of shit asshole...

She faced the arcade and walked towards it. Lucas wanted to meet her there, right? So that he could tell her everything. She wondered what he was going to tell her. Maybe it was something completely stupid...maybe it was something serious. Whatever it was, she'll find out today.

When she got inside, she tensed up when she saw Keith right in front of her, eating Cheetos and looking at her. "Jesus," she muttered under her breath.

"Good afternoon to you too," Keith replied plainly and sarcastically. She sighed and went around him to find Lucas, but he said, "Hey." She stopped and turned back at him, looking irritated.

"What?"

"You looking for Sinclair?"

She looked a bit surprised that he knew that. "Uh...yeah?"

He walked past her and said, "Follow me." She did so, wondering if Lucas talked to him beforehand. After all, she did remember him mentioning that they'll speak in private.

They reached to the end of the arcade, being in front of the "Employees Only" door. The guy handed her the bag of Cheetos and

told her, "Hold these for me, will ya?" She had held it for him as he reached for his keys and unlocked the door. He opened it, the red-haired girl seeing the African-American boy sitting near an "Out of Order" arcade machine. He smiled when he saw her, making her kind of smile back awkwardly before stepping inside and standing next to him.

Keith gave him a glare and held the doorknob. "You better give me that date now, Sinclair."

He rolled his eyes. "I told you I would-"

"Ah-ah-ah..." He held his hand out to stop him from speaking anymore. He looked at Max before looking at him again. "And try to keep things PG in here, alright?" They both gave him weird looks before he winked at them and closed the door.

The red-haired girl turned towards Lucas and stated, "Well, I'm here now."

He chuckled a little. "Yeah...you are."

"So..." She pulled up a chair and sat down on it, propping her skateboard next to it. "Now you're going to tell me everything, right?"

He nodded, looking serious. "Yes. But you have to promise not to tell anyone else, okay?"

She raised an eyebrow. "Why?"

He sighed. "I'm going to tell you the truth about everything that happened last year. If you tell anyone what I'm going to tell you now, everything will go to shit. You could be arrested..." He looked a little scared when he finished, "Or even killed."

She scoffed, her eyes wide and her grin smartass-like. "KILLED?"

"Yes." There was that serious look again...seriously, what kind of SECRET would get her arrested or KILLED? "Do you promise not to tell anyone?"

She sighed and muttered under her breath, "This is stupid..."

"Do you promise, Max?"

She groaned and rolled her eyes. "Yeah, sure. I promise." She crossed her arms. "Now spill it out already. We've got an hour."

He took a deep breath. He was really doing this...but he'll pull through with it. This was happening now and he shouldn't chicken out at the last minute. "Okay..." He looked at her solemnly. "Last year...Will didn't get lost in the woods. He got lost...somewhere else." That got her attention instantly. He didn't get lost in the woods? That was the official story...

But since they were friends, maybe he decided to tell them the truth, and that's why he was talking to her about this now. She wondered where this was gonna go...

---

Back in the Byers home, Jane and Joyce witnessed Will aggressively drawing the place where he saw Hopper and Terry on a piece of wrapping paper. Once he was done, he dropped the crayon he last used. His mother looked at him worryingly. "I-is this where you saw them? Is this where you saw Hopper and Ms. Ives?"

He nodded and answered rather apathetically, "Y-yes, I think so."

She nodded back at him and grabbed it. "Okay." She got out of the room, leading the tomboy to follow her right out. They both looked around to see where it would fit. They split up, Joyce being in the living room while Jane was in the kitchen. The girl looked around there until she found the spot for it. She looked at Joyce, pointed at it, and said, "Right here!" She turned and walked towards her and the spot, placing the picture over it. It matched the picture it covered.

"S-so, Hopper and your mom are right here?"

She nodded. "Yeah. Now we just need to find where 'here' is."

"Right..."

Her lips drew to a thin line. "So...did Hopper say anything before he left?"

The brunette woman sighed. "I-I think he said something about vines." She looked at her. "What about your mom? Did she say anything?"

She shook her head. "When I came home yesterday, she left a note at the door. It said that she'll be gone doing extra hours before returning this morning." She frowned, looking worried now. "But since Will also saw her there..."

Joyce felt bad for her, so she gently grabbed her arm and said softly, "Hey, I think she's going to be alright. She has Hopper with her and she can even handle herself. If she could survive being in the Upside Down by herself, then...she'll be alright with Hopper, okay?" Jane guessed she was right. Her mama was full of surprises-

They both heard a car approaching, so Joyce let go of Jane before they both went into the living room and looked out the window. Though Joyce was expecting either Hopper or Terry, or even both, it was neither of them. It was Bob, who got out of his car with a bunch of brain teasers carried in his hands. "Stay here, okay?" the woman asked the girl. She nodded before she got out and talked to him. Jane had met Bob before, he was a nice guy with a lot of knowledge. He must have gotten here to cheer Will up with those brain teasers.

Wait...brain teasers...

...

Later, Bob was brought inside, still carrying the brain teasers and looking around at all the connected drawings Will made. The boy himself was there, standing next to Jane. "Huh..." the man said, looking rather impressed. He looked at the auburn-haired boy and asked, "You drew these all by yourself, buddy?"

He nodded and quietly answered, "Yeah."

He looked around again. "Why, if you don't mind me-"

"Bob, I-I told you about the rules," Joyce told him, interrupting. "No questions, alright?" He nodded at her. "W-we just need you to help us..." She paused to go straight to the spot Will saw Hopper and

Terry. "...figure out what..." She saw that Bob wasn't following her and was still looking around. "Bob? Bob!" He, as well as the kids, turned to her. She gestured him to follow her. "Come on." He did so, the kids following suit. The woman grabbed the red crayon and drew an X over the spot. "Where...this is."

Jane nodded as Bob looked at it closely. "That's the goal: find the X," she added.

"Yeah?" He then grinned and looked up at his girlfriend. "What's at the X? Pirate treasure?" He then chuckled. His joke wasn't hated, but wasn't allowed.

"Bob." Joyce gave him a stern look. "I said no questions."

His grin disappeared by her face and her tone of voice. "Okay..." He looked around, being deep in thought for a second. He then grabbed Joyce and said, "Let's talk in private for a sec. Hang on, kiddos." They then got into a room and began to talk, leaving Jane and Will alone.

The curly-haired girl sighed, crossing her arms and looking down, thinking of her mom being there in the Upside Down...again. At least Hopper was with her, but...what if...

Will saw the solemn look on her face and felt awful...despite "him" not liking that feeling. He placed a sweaty hand on her shoulder. "J-Jane?"

She looked at him, thinking about what he was going to say to her before giving him a reassuring smile. "I'm alright, Will. Honest."

He wasn't convinced since he knew her for so long. She needed some good news. "Your mom...she's still okay. Hopper too."

She continued to smile at him. "Thanks for telling me that, Will, but I'm okay-"

He shook his head. "Y-you're not..." Her smile disappeared. "You look worried...that's okay, Jane. She's...your mom."

She couldn't deny that. Plus, he WAS her best friend since kindergarten. He would know how she feels by how she looks. She

gave him a genuine smile and replied, "Right...sorry."

He tried to smile back. "It's okay." He felt his heart racing and warmth washing over his face at the sight of her smile, "him" not liking it. He tensed up, clenching his fists and braving through the dislike "he" was feeling.

"...and that's Lake Jordan," Bob suddenly said, him and Joyce now being out of the room. That got the kids' attention as Will removed his hand from Jane's shoulder and they both looked at him and Joyce walking through the hallway. "And if that's Lake Jordan, then I can probably find..." He snapped his fingers and pointed at one spot. "Sattler's Quarry! That's it!" The kids looked both surprised and hopeful that Bob was getting somewhere...though they now wondered why he was naming off the bodies of water in Hawkins. Did his drawings look similar to him somehow? He turned and walked into the living room. "And if I just follow this naturally...it goes to Eno River." He then pointed at another spot of drawings on the wall. "There! See Eno River?" Both Joyce and the kids looked baffled because now that he said it...

He walked some more and continued, "The lines aren't roads, but they act as such!" He pointed at the brunette woman and got into the kitchen. "And if they act as roads, if you follow 'em, you'll see that they don't go over water." He pointed at the drawings once more as the three looked around with wide eyes. "THAT is the giveaway! Ha!" He then walked over to the kids. "You see, this isn't actually a puzzle, but a map!" He spread his arms out before dropping them at the sides. "It's a map of Hawkins!" That made the three's jaws drop. Will's drawings...they were actually the outline of Hawkins? The ENTIRETY of Hawkins?! Now the fact that Will could feel "him" spread out more made sense...

Bob laughed before looking at the auburn-haired boy. "Isn't that right, Will?" he asked him. The thing was...the boy didn't even know he drew the map of Hawkins. He just drew what he felt...

---

In the tunnels, Terry kept dropping small pieces of cigarettes to track her and Jim's path, the two stepping on live vines unknowingly. The police chief has suggested to try to contact his fellow officers through

radio, but she convinced him that there was no way communication would pull through in an environment like this, so he didn't.

Jim suddenly stopped, making Terry stop as well. He shined his light over wherever the hell they were, the two looking shocked as they saw that they were in a place that was wide in space, but filled with what looked like slime and waste, like dead animal carcasses. The dirty-blond-haired woman felt sick again, seeing these carcasses.

The man took slow and steady steps, telling her, "Careful not to step on anything." She nodded as she took slow and steady steps with him, looking down to make sure she didn't step on anything that could move. However, she stepped on a dead mouse and it spilled its guts at her step. She screamed and latched onto Jim, holding her as he shined his light on the carcass. She panted, holding onto him tight as he whispered, "It's alright...just a dead mouse." She took a deep breath and let go of him.

"Shit..." She then scoffed a little. "Reminds me of how much I hated Anatomy in high school."

He chuckled a little at that. "Is it NOT because of Mr. Kurdensberg?"

She solemnly laughed. "I hate...I hate seeing blood and guts and..." She sighed. "Anything a dead person or animal has."

The grin he had disappeared as he patted her shoulder. "No one does."

Before she could reply to that, they both heard a bit of squelching, the two whipping around and seeing a wall made by the vines that repaired the hole. They couldn't get a good look with the flashlight, so Jim got out a lighter from his pocket and lit it up, inching closer to the vines. When the fire got close, they both heard screeching and saw the vines moving away from it. They were both a bit surprised to see that, but...it made them think of something.

"Fire..." Terry muttered. "This place is cold. That means that anything that lives here is cold-blooded in some way."

"And it likes it cold..." Jim also muttered, getting the flame closer to

one of the vines, it screeching and moving away as it burned a little. "So we give them heat."

She nodded. "Exactly."

He capped his lighter, dimming the small fire, and handed Terry the flashlight. "Hold this." She did so as she watched him walk over to one animal carcass, pull out a long bone sticking out of it, take off his jacket, wrap it around the top of the bone, and then light it up with his lighter, creating a torch. "Stand back." She nodded and did as she was told, him storming to the wall of vines and pointing the torch to them. They all screeched and moved away from the torch in a circular motion, revealing a bare and vulnerable spot on the wall.

After that has happened, he stuck the torch on the ground near them and he began to dig his way through the hole, making Terry think that she should do the same. "Jim."

"Yeah?" he replied without stopping what he was doing.

She placed the flashlight right next to the torch and began digging through the hole with him. "Let me help."

He gave her a bit of a worried look. "Terry-"

"Don't 'Terry' me. You don't have to worry about me. I'm fine with getting sludge in my nails if it meant getting out of here faster, okay?" She was right...he knew she was right. She has been proven herself to be capable time and time again. It was just that...he cared for her...a lot. That was why he wanted to protect her...

---

Back in the Bertuzzi household, the adults sat with Mike at the dinner table, the boy looking over at his mother still on the chair, muttering things, and watching TV. There was a sandwich Giana made for him, but he didn't touch it. Caleb was sleeping upstairs in his room. "Listen, sweetie, we just want you to help us understand," Giana told him, her voice solemn.

"Yeah, bud," Nick added. "We just need to understand you."

"Could you, perhaps, tell us where you came from?" Jen asked him.



"Right, where have you been all this time, kid?" John also asked him. The boy answered neither of them, making all of the adults sigh and look worried.

"Listen, Mike. There was a policeman and a couple of women looking for you last year," Nick told him.

Giana nodded and looked at her long, lost nephew. "Yeah...I think they were looking for Nancy too...despite her being dead." Though he still didn't look at the adults, hearing that made his blood run cold. Nancy...was dead? Was she really? "Did they find you, Michael?"

He still focused on his mother, looking saddened as he asked, "Is she...is Mom going to get any better?"

The adults looked away from him sorrowfully, Giana holding John's hand tightly. "I hate to break it to you, bud..." Nick said to him. "But...no. Unfortunately, she can't get any better." Mike felt a lump forming in his throat when he heard that, making him look at his uncle.

"What...?"

His aunt sniffled and added, "Michael...it's not that...she's in any pain or anything." He looked at her, his eyes saddened. "The doctors say that she's just...stuck."

"Stuck?"

"Like a dream," Nick continued. "Like she's stuck in a dream."

So she wasn't gone...but stuck. "Is it a good dream?"

Giana gave him a sad smile and replied, "I hope so, sweetheart."

"We all do," John added in a somber voice.

He looked sad and worried as he looked over at Karen again. "Is it the same dream...?" he asked, his voice cracking a little.

"We don't know," Jen answered him. "From what we've seen, she could say some different words. But usually, she says those." He

sighed deeply, his eyes beginning to fill with tears. He began to sniffle as well. It hurt him to hear all of that and see her like this...she couldn't get better...

They all felt heartbroken to see him like this, so Nick reached out and held his hand, making him look at him. "Hey...your mom always believed that you would come home." That last word hit him hard.

"Home...?" he asked in a quiet, somber voice.

Giana nodded, also holding his hand. "Yes...home." This could be it then...

This could be his home.

He fully turned to them and held their hands with his other one. Jen and John had decided to hold that hand too, smiling in a sad way. "Welcome to the family, Michael," Jen said to him softly. Seeing his aunts and uncle supporting him like this made him feel so...heart-warmed, welcomed. This was what it felt like to join up with family, actual family...

...

Not much later, Nick and Giana specifically went with him to his room-or as it was now, Caleb's room. The boy looked around, seeing the painted clouds and pictures of animals before seeing his baby cousin sleeping inside what could have been his carriage. He walked towards him and softly placed his hand on the top of his head. This was the first time in his life that he ever touched a baby. His hair and skin felt so soft, like a pillow.

Giana giggled a little, her and Nick walking towards him. "Be careful not to wake him up," she whispered to her nephew. He turned his head to her, seeing her smile...which unfortunately reminded him of Terry's. "He doesn't like to be woken up when he's sleeping." He nodded as he got his hand off of Caleb's head.

"Who is he?" he asked her.

"He's your cousin, Caleb."

He looked a bit puzzled. "Cousin?"

She placed her hand on her chest. "I'm his mom. Your mom is my sister, so that makes you two cousins." He never knew that, so he nodded in understanding. "Speaking of being your mom's sister...that makes me your aunt." He knew that Giana was his "auntie", but Nick...

He looked at Nick and asked, "You're my...uncle, right?" That was the title, right? Uncle?

He grinned at him a little and nodded. "Right, I'm your Uncle Nick, Mike." So it was right. His grin disappeared for a bit as he said, "This was supposed to be your room."

Giana's smile also disappeared when he said that. "Yeah...your mom worked on this room all by herself..." She gulped, trying not to break down. "Just for you." That made his heart feel heavy once again. "I...I thought that this should be Caleb's room because...it was so empty...and it was never used. I thought it'd be perfect for Caleb." He nodded, though he still felt heavy. "We just...never thought you even existed until today. I'm sorry."

He shook his head. "It's fine." He looked down at his sleeping little cousin, feeling at peace seeing him sleep and move around so quietly.

"So, Mike," Nick started. "How about we get you a real bed and you can stay here with us, if you wanna?" That sounded good to him, since they made him feel welcomed before, so he nodded at him. He and his sister smiled for a bit. "That's good."

"Mike, we wanna help you, we really do," Giana told him. "All you need to do is talk to us." His lips drew into a thin line when she said that. "We'll...we'll give you time. You don't need to talk to us now, or today, just when you're ready, okay?"

"Yeah, we won't rush you, bud. You just got here and we're just getting to know each other. You deserve some time to adapt before talking to us." He liked that Auntie Giana and Uncle Nick were very kind to him. He was his mother's son and they were her mother's siblings, so...

He turned to them and nodded, answering, "Okay." They nodded back him before...seeing the hallway light flicker. He looked a bit puzzled and walked towards it. Nick and Giana saw it flicker too, also looking puzzled and walking towards it.

"That's weird," Nick stated. "Could've sworn the electrician yesterday said we have no problems."

"Maybe there's a problem with the wiring today?" Giana asked him.

"How?"

She shrugged. "I don't know, just..." The three then saw another hallway light flicker. Mike had a feeling this wasn't an electricity problem. He walked forward to that light, then another down the stairs. His aunt and uncle followed him as he got down on the floor and entered the main hallway. The lighting there was flickering as well.

"What's going on?" Nick muttered before Jen and John came to them.

"You see the lights?" John asked them.

They nodded. "Yeah. Dunno what the...what's going on." He censored himself because Mike was only a child.

"Is it the wiring?" Jen asked.

"No," Mike answered, following the flickering hallway lights and leaving the adults confused.

"What do you mean 'no'?" Giana asked him, she and the rest of the adults following him.

"It's not the wiring."

"No offense, Mike, but how would you know?" Nick also asked him.

When he reached the living room, he saw a lamp's light flicker not too far from his mom. He walked into there and looked at her, seeing that her nose was bleeding...like his would whenever he would use his powers. "It's Mom." He covered his hand with the sleeve of his

jacket and used that to wipe the blood off of her nose.

"Sunflower...rainbow," she muttered.

"What do you mean it's Karen-I mean, your mom?" Jen questioned.

He looked emotional as he answered, "She knows I'm here." It was such a relief to him because...to think that she wouldn't even acknowledge his presence...

Suddenly, the TV began to switch channels...without the remote. The adults were freaked out, spouses holding each other as John asked in shock, "How is that possible?!"

Nick and Giana's eyes widened, the two looking at each other as they muttered, "Powers..."

"What?" their spouses asked.

Mike walked to the TV, seeing the commercials flick away. "Mom has powers...like me." Jen and John felt tense hearing that, considering they witnessed him unlock the door without him touching it...

When the TV went to static, his mom's intention came to full realization for him. "She wants to talk."

---

**Stopping here! What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**I thought that moment with Jane and Will was kinda cute, now that I'm reading it again. Too bad he'll never get a chance with her...**

**I hope I wrote the talking scene with Mike and his aunts and uncles well. It's hard to write an emotional scene with a few people around, but hey. They're family. They needed to talk after so long. Besides, the adults finally get to see their long-lost nephew and he finally gets to see his aunts and uncles for the first time.**

**I just realized there's no Kali and Jonathan in this chapter...huh.**

**Anyways, review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

## 39. Just, Wow

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

In the Byers home, Joyce and Jane held the ends of a measuring tape. The tomboy stood at the Lover's Lake drawing as Bob was at a table with the actual map of Hawkins, marking down on it to find where the "X" was. "I'm 3.6 inches!" he yelled from the dining room. "What do you got?"

"I don't know!" Jane yelled back before looking at the brunette woman. "Mrs. Byers?"

"Hold on!" Joyce called out, the girl feeling the tape move with her. It stopped and she said, "21 feet and 4 inches."

"What about Tippecanoe to Danford Creek?" her boyfriend asked.

The girl heard the woman sigh. "D-Danford...okay, where's that?"

Will was helping with solving for the "X" as well, so he went into the dining room and pointed at it. "Here! In the dining room!" he told his mom. That made her move to the Danford spot while Jane went to the Tippecanoe spot.

"16 feet and 10 inches!"

"What about Danford to Jordan?"

Joyce sighed and gathered up the measuring tape, Jane letting go as everyone else got to the table Bob was at. "Come on, that HAS to be enough."

He shook his head at her. "It's not."

She began to look stressed. "Can you just...I don't know, figure it out?"

Now he sighed and stated, "It's hard. The ratio isn't exactly one-to-one. I mean, if you twist my arm..." He paused to look up at her. "And

you're twisting it hard..." She sighed at that before he looked down at the map. "Then I would say that the 'X' is..." He marked a red line on the map with his blue-ink pen. "...maybe half a mile southeast of Danford?" That made the three look very hopeful, especially Joyce and Jane.

Smiling, the woman grabbed the map and kissed him on the cheek, making him blush and smile. "Thank you! Thank you so much!" She then ran to head for the car, making the kids follow her as well.

They heard Bob ask, "Wait, hold on...are we REALLY going?" They were...they were going to find Hopper and Terry. Jane sincerely hoped that her mama would still be alright. Will did say she could pull through as well as Joyce, so...she had hope.

---

Dustin rode his bike to the Ives home and got off of it, not even bothering to get out the kickstand. He ran to the door and saw the note Terry left for the girls. He looked a bit puzzled at why this wasn't taken off. Oh well. He pressed the doorbell, waiting for someone to respond. It felt like a minute and there was nothing. He groaned and pressed the doorbell multiple times, still not getting any answer whatsoever. Now he was feeling frustrated. Was NOBODY home? Not even Ms. Ives? Or Jane? Or Kali? Why the HELL would the Ives house be completely empty today?!

"Sonuva bitch..." he muttered under his breath as he began to walk back to his bike. He tried to think, where the hell could Jane be? She said she would check up with Will...he snapped his fingers. "Will's." She probably slept over there and still there, if he was lucky and fast enough. That was it then, he'll go to Wi-

The sound of a car engine turning off broke him out of his thoughts and look to see Steve with a bouquet of lavenders. Was he here for Kali? Well, no shit he was here for Kali. Who was he going to give those to? Ms. Ives? However...seeing him made him think of another idea.

When Steve got out of the car with the lavenders, he took a deep breath and walked towards it, not caring enough to notice Dustin. "Okay, okay..." he muttered to himself before clearing his throat.



"Kali...I...need to tell you something...about the party." He didn't look too confident about that one. "Is that too aggressive...?" Here he thought he was ready to tell her the truth and what the hell happens? He's not even ready to greet her. Sure, he's got the flowers. Kali loved lavenders. She always loved purple...she REALLY loved purple. She made sure to tell him that-

"Hey, don't bother," he heard Dustin call out, making him stop and turn to him. Since when was he around?

"What?"

He walked towards him and continued, "No one's home. I rang the doorbell a lot and no one's answering."

He sighed and rolled his eyes. "Great." It wasn't like he was completely ready, but he worked himself up over nothing, after all this time. The curly-haired boy suddenly snatched the lavenders from him, making him exclaim, "Hey!"

The boy looked back at him as he then walked to his car. "Listen, there are more important things than your love life." He looked a bit baffled, wondering what the hell he was talking about. He opened the door to the passenger's seat and asked him, "You still have that bat?"

He looked puzzled. "Bat?"

"Y'know, the one with the nails?"

Now he was concerned. "Yeah, but why?"

"I'll explain on the way, okay?" He sat on the passenger's seat. Well, shit, if he was going to get in there...

He ran towards the car and asked, "Now?"

"NOW." He said that with such a large emphasis...what in the hell did he want him to do?

---

When Jim and Terry dug a big enough hole in the wall, the dirty-blond-haired woman had offered to get in there herself to see how

far it'll go. She had stuck her face into the hole before using her arms to get further in there. It didn't take long before she hit the end. She used her hand to feel if she could break through it. It turned out...it was solid. It made her blood run cold and her eyes to begin watering.

"Terry?" asked Jim, concerned. "Can we go through?"

She sniffled and crawled back out of the hole, shaking her head at him. "No...the end is solid," she answered somberly.

He looked away, looking angry and muttering, "Shit!" They both leaned against the wall and sunk into the ground, being right next to each other. They were both tired as hell and feeling horrible, especially Terry.

She sniffled again and began to sob, a couple tears releasing before she wiped them away. The man looked at her with a completely worried face. "Terry..."

"I just can't believe it, Jim. We've been digging this damn hole for hours..." She pointed at the hole in the wall they dug up. "And it's not even deep enough. We're tired and dirty and..." She let out more tears and wiped them away. "Now we can't get to Michael and I can't get to my girls..." She sobbed some more, covering her face with her hands. "They must be getting worried sick about us, especially my daughters about me! They're going to know that their mom is missing! And Mike, how is he going to handle us being gone for God knows how long?!" Jim looked very sorry for her. He knew how much her daughters meant to her and he could feel her about Mike. The kid was still pissed off at them when they left, but still...

He pulled her into a side hug, letting her cry on his shoulder as his eyes began to water as well. "We'll find a way out, Terry..." he whispered to her. "Somehow..." They stayed like that for a bit, the woman feeling only a little better when he said that. She needed his comfort right now and he needed to cheer her up so he didn't feel more shittier than he did.

However, they didn't notice the moving vines slowly creeping to them...and up on one of their legs. Feeling one, Terry looked down to see it get up on her leg. She screamed and tried to break free from it

by moving her leg around. Jim gasped and yelled, "Terry!" He quickly got out his pocket knife and cut one vine off of her. Suddenly, she saw some crawl up on his leg, making her shout, "They're on you, Jim!"

He looked to see that and yelled, "Son of a bitch!" He tried to cut the vines off of him while they both began to stand up. While the dirty-blond-haired woman tried to rip the vines away from every part of her body, he tried to cut them off. But it was all useless as the vines made them stiff and fall on the ground. They both screamed, more of the vines trying to cover them and hold them down.

Jim had dropped his knife, the two adults looking to find it as they began to curse. Terry saw it near her and tried to reach for it, but bound down like it was, she couldn't get it from that far. They both tried to stand up, Jim yelling, "Wait, wait, WAIT!" However, they got bound back down by more of the vines, making them both yell a lot of nos. They both began to cry, being completely helpless in this situation.

And with being bound down by the vines, they both screamed as loud as they could.

---

In the dug up crater, their screams were muffled, but still could be heard. Unfortunately, no one was around to hear them...

Making them completely trapped.

---

"And that was the last we saw of him," Lucas began to finish. "After that...he was just...gone." He rubbed his hands together. "Jesus, it still feels like it happened yesterday. Can't believe it's been that long."

Damn...that was something. "Yeah...I bet," Max replied, looking pretty shocked to hear everything. "Just...wow."

"I know, it's crazy. That's why Jane said that you wouldn't understand and..." He paused to sigh. "...why I told you that you'd think we're crazy."

She released a deep sigh and thought about everything he told her for a moment. So there was this kid, Michael Eleven, or Mike for short, and he had mind powers. She remembered Jane saying that he was their Mage. His hair was buzzed, but his skin was a bit pale, he had freckles, and he was JUST a bit taller than the rest of the boys. That description made her think of that asshole that bumped into her at school yesterday. He had pale skin, freckles on his face, and was a bit tall for his age...but he had a head full of black hair. She thought that couldn't have been him, but the shit Lucas told her that all of that happened a year ago, so...maybe he did grow hair during all that time and that kid WAS him. Plus, he said he didn't talk all that much. He didn't say anything to her before running away. There was also the statement that he really liked Jane, so maybe he was there to...see her?

Damn it, she didn't know. All of what he told her was crazy and unbelievable, but he told her so yesterday, so she had no idea HOW she was supposed to feel about all of this.

Lucas saw her thinking through the expressions she had on her face and frowned, knowing that she was probably digesting what he told her. He held up his hands and stated, "I know it's a lot to take in, Max. Take your time."

She heavily sighed and replied, "It's...it's just that..." She shook her head, closing her eyes for a bit before opening them to look at him. "I don't know if I should believe you or REALLY think you're crazy."

"I KNOW everything sounds crazy, but it's ALL true!"

"INCLUDING this 'Mike'..." She used air-quotes with his name. "...having mind powers?"

"Yes." There was that serious look again...

"INCLUDING this...'Upside Down' Will was trapped in?"

"YES."

"And INCLUDING this 'Demogorgon' and the government baddies from Hawkins La-"

He instantly stood up from his chair and yelled, "YES, MAX, YES!" She tensed up at that. "I would NEVER lie to you, okay? Everything I told you is a hundred-percent TRUE, even if it sounds like some fairy tale!"

This didn't help her thoughts at all. She was still stuck between wanting to believe him and not believe him. She looked at the clock, seeing it has been an hour, and grabbed her skateboard. "Okay...if everything you told me was...true..." She faced him with a serious look. "Then you have to prove it."

His eyes widened at that. How the hell was he supposed to prove all of THAT to her?! "Wait-"

She went to the door and opened it. "I SERIOUSLY need to go." She pointed at him sternly. "DON'T follow me out!"

He sighed as he ran to her when she opened the door and got out. They got out of the end of the arcade thanks to Keith opening the flip door for them, then Lucas asked, "You're not gonna tell anyone about what I told you, right?"

She scoffed. "Even if I did, who's gonna believe me?" she answered as she turned to him. "I don't know, Lucas. Just DON'T FOLLOW ME OUT, okay?" He looked rather saddened as he saw her open the exit door, seeing her brother in the sports car as well as her going to it. He (and Dustin too) saw that she didn't exactly get along with him. So, he had to prove to her that everything he told her was true...but how? Shit, HOW?!

...

Meanwhile, Billy saw Lucas looking at his step-sister in the arcade, making him look out the window as she got into his car and buckled up. "The hell did I tell ya, shitbird?" he asked her.

She looked at him, trying to act coy, and answered, "I'm not late-"

"Y'know what the hell I'm talking about."

It didn't take her long to realize what he was saying. "Who, Lucas?"

He scoffed. "So, the crazy boy's got a name now?"

She mentally cursed herself and stammered, "I-it's a small town, okay? We weren't hanging out."

Yeah, sure. His lips thinned out a little. "Ya know what happens when you lie, right?"

She still tried to act coy. "I'm not lying." He gave her a sharp glance that made her blood run cold before he drove them away. As if she didn't feel shitty already...

She saw Lucas come out and watch her leave, making her feel more shittier than before. She hoped that he could prove his story to her so that she didn't think he was crazy because really...he wasn't THAT bad.

Wait...how was Lucas going to prove her that his story was real if Billy didn't like him...?

Goddamn it.

---

Kali held the tape recorder and had played everything Dr. Owens said while Jonathan was still standing next to her and Murray sat down like he asked, looking like he was digesting everything. When Dr. Owens in the recording stop talking, she stopped the tape, asking the theorist in confidence, "So, that should be enough, right?" The bearded man looked up at her like he was missing the point of her question, making her sigh. "This entire tape recording should be enough to incriminate the Lab, right?"

He still didn't answer and he stood up and...began to leave the secret office. The two friends looked at each other, being puzzled by his action before following him. They saw him in the kitchen...with a metal cup, some ice in that cup, and a bottle of vodka, some in that cup. That made the Indian girl scoff. "Are you serious?"

The man began shaking the bottle. "I'm thinking."

She looked at him in disbelief. "VODKA makes you think?"

He looked at her with irritation. "It's a central nervous system depressant, so yes, it does make me think." Kali rolled her eyes, thinking this was unbelievable. He poured it into a glass cup and carried it as he walked over to a record player. He set the cup of vodka on another table as he got out a record.

"Music? You're going to play MUSIC while drinking VODKA?!"

"Yes, it helps me..."

"Think?" Jonathan finished for him, the conspiracy theorist nodding. Both of the teens couldn't believe this. They knew this man was a bit odd, but this was stupid. He got out the record and set it to play on the console. Once the jazz music in the record played, he grabbed his cup of vodka again and began to roam around the living room.

Kali walked to Murray and asked, "How long does this take?"

"Longer if you keep talking," he answered, annoyed.

She scoffed again. "I think what I asked is pretty simple: is the tape incriminating or not?!"

He laughed and looked at her. "That wasn't a simple question you asked-in fact, nothing you've told me was simple."

She looked shocked to hear him say that as well as Jonathan, who walked right to her side and asked, "You don't believe us, do you?"

"Oh no, I believe you, but there's the problem: you don't want ME to believe you, you need THEM to believe you."

The two teens looked completely puzzled. "I'm sorry, 'them'?" Kali asked.

"Who's 'them'?" Jonathan also asked.

"Them." He pointed...somewhere to his right and walked to the array of TVs and radios he had at one side of the room. "Capital T-H-E-M. Your priests, your postmen, your teachers, the ENTIRE world at large." He scoffed. "They'll never believe any of this."

Kali gave him an irritated look as she opened her palms. "Why the hell did you think we made the tape?!"

He looked at her once again. "Ah, see, that's actually easy to bury, like REAL easy."

She scoffed at him once again, holding up the walkman. "Easy? EASY?! He ADMITS it! YOU heard it! He admits to CULPABILITY!"

"Stop being naive, Kali!" She gave him a sharp stare as he continued, "Those people...the rest of the world...aren't wired like me and you." He began to slowly approach her. "They don't spend their lives trying to look what behind the curtain." He grinned, chuckling a little and shrugging. "They actually like the curtain because it gives them stability, comfort, and definition. This..." He shook his head. "...would open the curtain, and the curtain BEHIND that curtain, okay? So the second someone of authority calls out bullshit, everyone will nod and say, 'Ha! Yes! See?! It was BULLSHIT all along!' And that's if you even GET their attention!"

She clenched her fists, feeling pissed at what he told her. "So, you're telling me we did all of this for NOTHING?"

"I'm SAYING that I'm THINKING!" He took a sip of the vodka, being hit hard by it as he grunted and went back to the kitchen. Kali huffed, leaning on a chair and feeling frustrated as hell.

The auburn-haired guy turned to her, feeling just as frustrated, and whispered to her, "This is ridiculous."

"I know, it's stupid," she whispered back as she saw Murray water down the vodka...water down...

Wait.

She walked towards him as he said, "That's it!"

Jonathan and Kali gave him looks as he asked, "What's it?"

"It's too strong." They both knew he was talking about the vodka, the teen guy sighing and walking away in defeat. The man took another sip of the vodka, saying, "Much better." He poured some more and



took another sip. He released a blissful sigh and murmured, "Perfect."

This made Kali think of something. As much as she hated to admit it, Murray was right. Everyone wanted the comfort of everything being normal and the government saying whatever they want to make them believe it. Leaving the tape as it was would make it easy for the government to call bullshit. She wanted to leave the tape as it was, but now it wasn't an option. Instead...to make it actually believable and have Them question the government...

She chuckled and leaned towards the table, saying, "We water the story down."

He grinned and pointed her proudly. "Exactly."

Jonathan was puzzled by this, making him go to her side again. "Wait, what?"

"Your story, we have to moderate it," Murray stated, getting another cup and pouring the vodka in it. "Just like this drink here." He set the bottle down and continued, "Perhaps...Barbara may have gotten exposed to dangerous toxins from the Lab."

Kali snapped her fingers and pointed at him. "There was a leak from the Lab, maybe from Three Mile Island. She got exposed to those in the water and died."

"Scary, but familiar." He placed the cups right in front of the two teens. "Close enough to hit the man right where it hurts." He grinned as well as she did.

"And those arseholes that killed my dear friend Barbara..." She carried the cup of vodka.

"...will go down in power." That made them all smile, the two teens approving of it. Raising their drinks up, they all began to drink the watered down vodka.

---

Giana has gotten a sleeping mask from her and John's room and handed it to her nephew. Mike saw that the sleeping mask was soft and black. "This is your Uncle John's mask," she told her. "Will that

do?"

He looked up at her, and then John, who nodded in approval, so he nodded back and answered, "Yes."

Suddenly, he and the adults heard Caleb crying upstairs, making Giana sigh and stand up. "I'll handle it."

John stood up as well and said, "Let me come with you."

"It's fine. He probably needs to be changed." She looked back at Mike and asked, "You do want everything to be quiet, right?"

"Yes," he answered again before she nodded at him and proceeded to go upstairs.

...

In the living room, the freckled boy sat in front of his mother, putting the sleeping mask as the TV still spewed static and Caleb was still crying. "So, you want us to stay here with you?" Nick asked.

"Yes," he answered once again.

"And we won't mess up anything for you?" asked Jen.

He shook his head. "No."

The adults nodded as they all heard Caleb's crying fade away, much to their relief. After half a minute, they heard Giana come downstairs and join them in the living room. "It's time?" she asked them.

"Yes, baby," John answered her as she sat next to him. She and Nick released heavy sighs.

"Mike? If...if you can talk to your mom...can you tell her that Nick and I love her very much?"

The man in question gulped and added somberly, "Yeah, and that...we're sorry that we, and our spouses, didn't believe everything she said?"

Feeling their sincerity, Mike nodded and answered, "I'll try." That made all of the adults smile before they completely fell silent.

"Breathe...sunflower...rainbow," Karen muttered, looking at the TV and still rocking on her chair. Mike had started drowning out his senses to finally speak with her. "Four to the right...two to the left. Four-fifty...breathe."

---

*When she said that, he opened his eyes and saw her not too far from Mike. "Breathe...sunflower...rainbow," she continued to mutter as he slowly approached her. "Four to the right...two to the left...four-fifty. Breathe..."*

*He looked somber, saying, "Mom?"*

*"Sunflower...rainbow."*

*"Mom...it's me...Michael." He finally got close to her. "I'm here."*

*"Four-fifty. Breathe...sunflower...rainbow."*

*He bent down to her eye-level a little and stated, "I'm home now."*

*That was when she looked at him straight in the eye and said sharply, "No." His eyes widened and his skin crawled at that one word. Suddenly, she grabbed his arm and got him into that darkness once again.*

*...*

*He opened his eyes once again and looked around. She wasn't there anymore, making him worry.*

*"Mom?!" he cried out before hearing someone run behind him. He turned around to see his mom standing and running as fast as she could, wearing her curly hair down and wearing a dark velvet robe. That made him worry even more. She began to slow her running, her grunting and holding her stomach. She fell to the ground, making him scream, "MOM!" He ran and went to her side, seeing that she was bleeding from her bump of a stomach. "Mom, what's happening?! What do I do?!"*

*She breathed shakily and muttered, "Oh...my daughter..."*

*He looked puzzled. "Daughter? What-"*

*"Oh my God, oh my GOD!" he heard Giana, sounding younger, yell out. "KARRIE!" He looked up where her voice came from and before he even knew it...he was experiencing an entire series of flashbacks from Karen.*

---

**I'm actually going to stop here. What do you guys think of this chapter? Any mistakes or typos that I've missed?**

**I figured that the ENTIRE series of Karen's flashbacks I plan on writing would be too much for this one chapter, so you guys'll have to wait until the next chapter to see them!**

**Anyways...**

**Dustin and Steve finally meet...under a circumstance a bit different from canon, but still, they meet! Let the bonding begin!**

**So...Hopper AND Terry are attacked by the vines...twice the trouble...**

**So, instead of Max not believing Lucas at first like in canon, she's at a crossroads about what he said. After all, he DID tell her that she'll think he and the rest of the Party were crazy. She still needs proof though.**

**I figured that Kali would be stubborn about being right, so that's why she was a little more aggressive towards Murray here.**

**Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

## 40. WHOA!

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

*Karen looked up at her brother and sister, both of whom looked younger at the time, and crouched over her. Nick held her face and said as calmly as he could, "O-okay, just breathe, sis! Breathe!"*

*Giana nodded. "Y-yeah! Just breathe in and out! The ambulance is on its way! Just stay calm, alright?!"*

*Feeling only a bit of comfort from her siblings, she nodded at them and answered, "O-okay, okay, I'll try..." She held both their hands and before she even knew it...*

---

*She was lying in a cot, being escorted by two doctors, one of them telling her, "It's going to be alright, darling. Just stay with us!" She held onto her stomach, trying to get through the pain as much as she could.*

...

*Though this was a blur, she was finally in the emergency room, seeing a few doctors and hearing them talk, though their voices were nothing but indecipherable muffles. She was given a sedative and remembered a doctor pulling out a scalpel to cut her stomach open...she needed a C...?*

...

*After seeing the darkness, she woke up and saw a cleaned-up baby wrapped up in a pink blanket. She felt so overjoyed to see her, taking her newborn daughter into her arms and crying happy tears. The baby began crying, the woman stroking her head as she murmured, "Nancy...my sweet Nancy."*

*Nick and Giana were there too, looking at their new niece closely and smiling. "She's so adorable~," Giana said in a singsong voice.*

*"Can't wait to spoil her when she begins to grow up," Nick teased.*

Karen scoffed at him. "Don't you dare, Nick."

---

It was four years later now. While she was cooking in the kitchen with a pregnant belly again, she heard a little girl say, "Look, mommy! Look!" She turned to see little Nancy with her long, wavy, light-brown hair, pearly skin, and light-blue eyes. She wore a cute little pink dress and carried a piece of paper in one of her hands. She held it up to reveal a picture of a sunflower drawn in crayons. "I drew a sunflower!"

She smiled and held it in her hands. "Awww~, that looks pretty, Nancy," she said to her in a singsong voice.

"I want you to keep it. Pleeeeease?" She had on the cute puppy face the brown-haired woman couldn't resist.

She giggled and answered, "Okay, Nancy, I'll keep-" Suddenly, her water broke, making her gasp and drop the picture.

Nancy tensed up at the sound and asked, "Wh-what was that?"

She tried to smile reassuringly at her daughter. "Your brother...he wants to get out." Now she gasped.

"Michael's getting out?!"

She nodded, holding her stomach. "Y-yes. Tell your aunts and uncles to call the hospital, okay?"

She nodded back at her, but looked worried about her mom. "Are you gonna be okay?"

She kept her reassuring smile. "Yes, Nancy. Now go." She gestured her to get out.

The little girl ran out of the kitchen and yelled, "UNCLE NICK! AUNTIE GIANA! UNCLE JOHN! AUNTIE JEN!"

"Nancy?" Nick asked. "What's-"

Karen sunk into the floor as the pain of labor started to kick in. "MICHAEL'S GETTING OUT OF MOMMY! CALL THE HOSPITAL!"

*Gasps were heard and John, who was Giana's newlywed husband at the time, answered, "I'll do it! Hold on!"*

*The curly-haired woman could feel like she was being split in half now, making her scream. She was going to bleed...like when she was pregnant with Nancy. She could see her older sister and Jen, whom Nick married a year and a half ago. "Breathe, Karen," the light-brown-haired woman told her calmly, she and Giana holding her hand.*

*"Breathe, Karrie. You can make it through this, like with Nancy!" She hoped so. After all...HE didn't get to have Nancy, so...*

---

*She was back in the hospital, holding her stomach as the doctors that escorted her assured her that she was going to be fine. Then she was in the emergency room once again, all of it being a blur as she was given a sedative and another C-section. The darkness that got to her was shorter than with Nancy though, as she woke up to see that her newborn son, Michael, was crying, covered in blood and taken away by a doctor to clean up. That very same doctor came back to look down at her with another doctor, the voices in the background drowning out as they both removed their masks. She couldn't believe it...*

*It was Ted and Brenner. She should've known her bastard of an ex husband was one of them with his glass...*

*...*

*After sleeping, she woke up and heard some sobbing and sniffing. She slowly looked to her left to see her older sister crying, her fiancée hugging to her his side while everyone else looked somber. She was confused. "Guys?" she asked in a weak voice.*

*Everyone looked up at her, still looking solemn. "Hey..." Jen greeted.*

*"What's going on?" She looked around, trying to find her son and being confused about not seeing him. "Where's Michael?"*

*Giana continued to cry and sob into her tissue as her hurt voice said, "We're so sorry..."*

*She looked even more confused. "About what? Where's my son?"*

Nick sniffled, shaking his head. "How can I...say it?" Jen hugged him to comfort him.

Suddenly, Karen realized what they were thinking...that she lost Michael during birth. "Wait...I heard him cry. I heard Michael cry."

All of them shook their heads, Jen stating, "He wasn't breathing, the doctors told us."

She remembered seeing her ex-husband and his bastard friend as doctors...she wasn't surprised that they lied to them. She sat up a little. "I heard him CRY, I swore I heard him!" That just made her siblings and their loved ones more saddened than before. "I saw them there."

Her older sister looked at her with pink eyes. "Who...?"

"Ted and Brenner...they took him!" She tried to remove her IV, making the rest of the adults stand up and bound her down to stop her.

"NO, KARRIE!" Giana exclaimed.

"DON'T TAKE IT OUT, SIS!" Nick also exclaimed.

"CALM DOWN!" John shouted.

"KAREN, STOP!" Jen yelled.

"LET GO OF ME!" Karen kept yelling at them, prompting the nurses to come inside and give her another sedative before things went south.

---

When she woke up, her siblings and their loved ones drove her and Nancy home. The little girl didn't know about Michael's fate yet, looking worried. "Where's Mike?" she asked the adults, including her mother. She looked up at Karen. "Mommy?"

She just sniffled and held her close, deciding not to tell her about his true fate yet because she was so young.

---

The next day, Giana cooked breakfast just when Karen woke up and looked around Mike's room. She didn't set up this entire room just for it to



*be empty. She'll get him from those bastards, even if-*

*"Nancy?" Giana called out. "Hey, if anyone's upstairs, can you get her for me?" Karen sighed heavily. It was like the events of yesterday never happened...maybe seeing her daughter will make her cheer up.*

*"I'll get her," she replied in a rather solemn voice as she got out of his room and walked to Nancy's. When she opened the door, she saw that her daughter was nowhere to be seen in there. Her eyes widened as she looked around for her in the room. "Nancy? Nancy?!"*

*"Is she not in her room?!" Nick yelled from downstairs.*

*First Michael...then Nancy. "Bastards..." she muttered before yelling, "She's not!"*

---

*A missing child report was made to the police and there was a search party to look for little Nancy. It's been a few days and there were still no sign of her. To Karen, it wasn't surprising because she knew those two bastards took them. She had stolen files from Hawkins Lab to find out more about them and see if there was any way to infiltrate them.*

*Tonight, she wore a blue and red plaid shirt, skinny jeans, and slippers. As she was looking through one in her room, she heard someone knocking on it, hearing Giana's voice stuttering, "K-Karrie..." Concerned, she hid her file under her blanket, got up from the bed, walked to the door, and opened it to see not only her older sister, but also her older brother looking completely mournful.*

*"Wh-what is it? What's happening?" she asked them.*

*"It's Nancy." Her eyes widened.*

*"Nancy...?"*

---

*They drove her to a police scene in the woods. When the car stopped, Karen didn't waste any time getting out and running towards it in her flats. "Nancy!" she cried out as she saw medics lay her body on a cot. She managed to get close to see her daughter, seeing her limp and completely pale, having her hand over a large, bleeding wound. She began to cry. Did*

*they discard her because she failed them...?*

*However, when she touched her skin, she felt that it was smooth...too smooth. The skin was also stiff at her touch. That told her everything she needed to know.*

*"M'am, we are so sorry about your daughter-" one of the medics said before she cut them off.*

*"No..." She shook her head, backing away from the dead body and pointing at it. "That's not her."*

*Her siblings looked like they were going to cry when she said that. "Sis-"*

*"No! THAT'S NOT NANCY! THAT'S A FAKE! THAT THING IS NOT MY DAUGHTER!" At the moment, it didn't matter to her that she made her brother and sister cry. She knew the truth.*

---

*Not much to her surprise, her siblings and their loved ones didn't believe her and thought she was crazy. That meant that she had to get her children back alone somehow.*

*It was a couple years later and she founded a safe Nick had in remembrance of their father. She wore a sand-colored turtleneck, a short and sleeveless brown coat, brown pants, and black high heels. With the files she had stolen from Hawkins Lab scattered around her, she moved the combination knob and muttered to herself, "Four to the right...two to the left." She heard the safe click, making her sigh in relief as she pulled out the gun her Dad used to hold once to teach Nick how to shoot. She didn't know how to...*

*But it was her best shot if her initial plan doesn't work out.*

*She grabbed the pistol ammo from the safe and loaded the pistol with them.*

---

*Later that day, she drove to Hawkins Lab, taking a deep breath to make sure she wasn't nervous about this. When she was arriving at the gate that was open for someone else, she closed her eyes and used one of her powers to become invisible to those who could see her. She parked at one*

spot and got out with her purse that hid the gun inside. She closed the door of her car and walked right inside with a few more women that were unaware of her presence. When she passed a security guard, she could feel her nose bleeding and her brain straining. She still kept it up to get inside without any problems.

Then over a loudspeaker, she heard Ted's voice announce, "This is a warning for all personnel, I repeat, all personnel." She froze at the sound of his voice as he continued, "An intruder is on the loose. Look out for her, she may be armed."

She gritted her teeth and muttered, "Damn it." How the hell did he know?! She used one of her powers to make herself invisible to everyone she saw.

Unless that excluded the cameras.

She huffed and continued on forward, taking out the pistol while some of the workers began to run away and the alarm began to sound. That meant she had to go to Plan B.

...

The curly-haired woman got up to the Labs floor and stopped using her power. Trying to ignore the headache she got from using it, she wiped the blood off of her nose with her hand. When the doctors say her with the gun, she aimed it at them and yelled, "Stay back! Stay back or I'll shoot!" They screamed and scrambled to get away from her, just what she needed.

She looked into rooms as she asked, "Michael? Nancy?" After seeing through a few different rooms, she turned and saw a painted rainbow near the door. Hoping that her children were in there, she walked towards it and was about to open it until she heard an unfamiliar voice say, "Okay, kids. Let's just stay calm and evacuate." Karen's hand was still on her knob, but she listened closely, pressing her ear against the door. "Nancy, hold your little brother's hand and don't let go, okay?"

"Okay, Mrs. Brenner," she heard a little girl reply. She gasped. Her voice was a little deeper, but she knew that was truly Nancy's voice.

She opened the door aggressively and pointed the gun at a woman in a white lab coat, her dirty-blond hair down to a low ponytail, and her

brown eyes widening. "Stay away from my children!" she yelled at her. She held her hands up and backed away from them.

"O-okay..." the woman replied, her ID badge reading, "Brenner, Teresa".

When her back hit the wall, Karen looked down to see her kids looking up at her, feeling overjoyed to see them again. Nancy was a bit taller and her hair was longer. She wore a white, long-sleeved turtleneck with a sleeveless navy-blue dress under it. Michael had a head full of black hair and had semi-transparent freckles. His skin was the same complexion as Nancy's and he wore a white collared shirt with navy-blue overalls. The woman was crying and smiling, putting her pistol back in her purse and walking to them.

Nancy's sky-blue eyes widened and beginning to tear up as she murmured, "Mommy...?"

It felt so good to hear her call her that again. "Nancy..." She looked at her son, for the first time in her life. "Michael...my sweetheart-" Suddenly, the guards came and pulled her back, shocking her and making her kick around, struggling. "No, NO! LET ME GO! LET ME GO! THEY'RE MY CHILDREN!"

When she was getting pulled out of the rainbow room, she heard Nancy shout out, "MOMMY!" She saw her and Michael come out of the room, the little girl crying while the little boy looked rather sad. "NO, DON'T TAKE MOMMY AWAY!" The woman cried at that as she saw Nancy drag her little brother to get to her. Unfortunately, two other guards appeared and grabbed them, holding them back, especially Nancy, who began to struggle and reach her hand out to her. "MOOOMMYYYYY!" Mrs. Brenner appeared again, looking aghast at what was going on.

As much as she wanted to break free and kill those guards to get her children back...it was too late.

...

She was dragged into a secret room and was bounded down to a cot by the lab personnel. She tried her damn best to break free, yelling, "NO! LET ME GO! I WANT MY CHILDREN BACK!" The personnel finally bound her chest to the cot, making her unable to move and escape. "No...NO!"

*She then looked up, seeing Ted and Martin looking down at her with such apathetic faces. Seeing their faces again released much anger from her. "DAMN YOU! DAMN YOU BOTH!" Their expressions haven't changed as her head was tightly grabbed by one of the personnel. Another one placed a plastic brown gag in her mouth to muffle her screaming.*

*As two electric sticks were placed at the sides of her head, Martin looked at Ted and asked, "Which level do you think would be best?"*

*Her tears continued to stream her face as her ex-husband gestured the man near the shock machine and answered, "Four-fifty."*

*The bald and bearded man at the machine turned the knob to just that as she was screaming through the gag, continuing to cry. He then turned it on and before she even knew it, the volts had sent a large amount of pain to her head. She screamed as loud as she could through the gag as she felt her brain being scrambled like crazy. She held onto the bars of the cot so tight and then after what felt like forever...it was done.*

*That was it...that was the end of her functioning like a human being.*

*She slowly opened her eyes, thinking back to the past. "Breathe!" she remembered Nick yelling. She remembered being escorted on a cot...was it for Nancy or...*

*"The ambulance is on its way!" she remembered Giana also yelling.*

*"It's going to be alright, darling," one of the doctors told her that one time. "Stay with us."*

*Two flashes of both of her children crying as newborns appeared as she then saw Nancy's drawing and remembered her saying, "I drew a sunflower!" Sunflower...*

*She remembered her siblings, John, and Jen holding her back before a nurse gave her a sedative before remembering the last two moves for the combination. Four to the right...two to the left...*

*She remembered a gunshot, then the rainbow. Rainbow...*

*Then her ex-husband saying, "Four-fifty." Four-fifty...*

*Many images flashed into her mind so fast...breathe...sunflower...rainbow...four to the right...two to the left...four-fifty.*

*"MOOOMMYYYYY!" she remembered that girl yelling...sunflower...four to the right...two to the left...breathe...four to the right...two to the left..*

*Sunflower...rainbow...breathe...four to the right...two to the left...four-fifty.*

*Breathe...sunflower...rainbow...four to the right...two to the left...*

*Four-fifty.*

---

Mike gasped hard and removed the sleeping mask from his face, his nose bleeding as well as his mom's. She kept muttering those words...now he knew why. He tried to regain his breathing from an intense experience like that.

"Oh my God, are you okay, sweetie?!" Giana exclaimed, the adults coming right to the boy's side to make sure he was alright. He didn't answer, still breathing unevenly as the adults hugged him. He held two of their arms as a hug back, still looking at his mom with tear-filled eyes. All of that...she went through all of that...and Nancy was his sister...and she saw Terry...and his dad and the doctor were the reasons why she was like this...

"It's okay...it's okay, we're here..." Nick whispered to him to comfort him.

---

Joyce drove her car with the kids and her boyfriend inside, now the sky being dusky. They were exactly where Bob predicted that Hopper and Terry would be: half a mile southeast of Danford. Both Joyce and Jane looked around, looking both puzzled and worried. "I-I don't get it," she said, looking at Will. "There's nothing here." He looked back at her and frowned.

"A-are we close, Bob?" the woman asked him.

"We're in the vicinity," he answered, looking at the marked down

map.

"Wh-what do you mean by 'vicinity'?"

"I mean that we're close!"

While they were arguing, the auburn-haired boy closed his eyes to find the two adults. After a bit, he opened them and said, "Turn right!"

Everyone looked back at him with wide eyes. "Wh-what?"

"I saw him."

Joyce looked around her surroundings. "Wh-where is he-"

"Not here, in my now-memories!"

Bob looked puzzled. "Your what?"

"JUST TURN RIGHT!"

Without another second of hesitation, the woman did exactly that, the turn more rough and abrupt, nearly moving everyone out of their seats. Without a second thought, Will grabbed Jane's hand as the car accidentally ran over the farm sign and some hay, almost everyone screaming. When the hay cleared from the windshield, they saw that they were heading straight towards Hopper's car as well as Terry's. Joyce slammed on the brakes, making an abrupt stop that nearly launched everyone forward. She quickly put the car into parking gear and asked, "I-is everyone okay?"

While Jane panted, she noticed that Will was holding her hand...maybe to handle Joyce's driving at the moment. However, the sight of her mom's car made her feel completely shocked and sentimental. "Mama..." she muttered, squeezing Will's hand a little tighter. The boy looked at her worriedly.

"Wait, Terry and Jim are here?" Bob asked, completely puzzled by the situation. He looked at his girlfriend for an answer. "Joyce? What's going on?"

She didn't answer him and looked back at the kids. "O-okay...Jane, Will. You two need to stay here." She opened the door and began to exit out.

Will looked worried about his mom now and leaned forward. "No, no, no, Mom! It's not safe!"

"That's why I need you two to stay here."

"But my Mama's in there!" Jane said, her tone sad.

She gave her a reassuring look. "Don't worry, sweetie. Bob and I will make sure she's fine, okay?" She frowned, but nodded. As she and Bob finally got out of the car, she heard her yell, "HOPPER! TERRY!" They got into the dug-up crater to try and find them.

Jane deeply sighed and leaned her head against the back of the car seat, closing her eyes and still hoping that her mother was alright. She still wanted to go down there though. Will continued to look worried for her, especially since...he knew what was becoming of Terry and Hopper right now. If his mom and Bob get to them in time though, they could be saved. That was why they were doing all of this, to save them.

He gave her hand a gentle squeeze and said, "Jane-"

"I want to go down there and see her, Will," she somberly interrupted him. "She's my Mama."

He frowned again, but tried to look reassuring to her. "M-my mom and Bob...they'll find them, Jane. Don't worry."

She looked at him with pleading eyes. "Is she...a-are they..."

"They'll find them, Jane. I promise."

She smiled at him, loosening her grip on his hand. "You always cheer me up, Will."

He blushed at that comment, though "he" hated that...and the fact that he was holding her hand like he did. "We're...best f-friends, remember?" He tried to smile at her. She did spot the tremor when he



said "friends", like...he did have a crush on her after all...why would he still be holding her hand?

Maybe he needed the comfort, so she let him keep holding her hand as she unbuckled herself. "Let's, um, go outside for a little bit," she suggested, opening the window.

He nodded and replied, "O-okay." He let go of her hand to unbuckle himself as well. They both got out of the car and walked towards the hole together.

Jane looked shocked at how big it was. "Jesus, Mama and Hopper dug all of this..." she muttered to herself before looking at Will. "D-do you see anything? In your now-memories?" His eyes big, he shook his head, making her worry a little.

Suddenly, they both heard vehicles approaching, making them turn around and see...the vans from Hawkins Lab coming their way. Neither of them looked happy to see them, the two looking at each other before looking at the vans again, parking close to Joyce's car.

---

Joyce had been calling Hopper's name as well as Terry's, finding the pieces of cigarettes at one path and going down there with Bob, who was actually fascinated by the tunnels, or "Will's map", he called them. They eventually reached to the room with the rotten animal carcasses, the brunette still screaming, "HOPPER?! TERRY?!" With her flashlight, she shined it at the now burnt-out torch and Hopper's sheriff hat, much to her shock and Bob's. "Th-this is..." She shined her light everywhere else in the room before finding Jim's limp hand and Terry's limp leg. She gasped in horror. "Oh my God, IT'S THEM!"

She and her boyfriend quickly ran to them, her saying, "I got Hopper! You help Terry!"

"O-okay!" he replied as they both got to their respective person and began ripping the vines off of them quickly. They saw their faces through the now torn-up "masks", seeing that they were gasping for air...barely. "She's choking!"

"S-so is he!"

They both have struggled to get them out of the choking position they were in before the police chief choked out, "Knife."

"Kn-knife?" Joyce asked frantically.

"Knife...near me..." Terry also choked out.

Bob shined his flashlight at the pocket knife, saying, "There!" He grabbed it and used the blade to cut the vine choking the dirty-blond-haired woman. She gasped for air again, yelling, "M-my hands!" He then cut the vines off of both of her hands, making her finally able to rip the vines off of her.

"Give that to me!" Joyce yelled at Bob. He did so and she began to do the same thing to the vines on Hopper. When the two other adults were able to move, the couple helped them rip out the rest of the living vines off of them. They screamed as they exchanged the knife between one another to cut the more sturdier vines. Hopper was the first to break free from all of the vines first, standing up staggeringly as Joyce's eyes filled with tears and her hands cupped his cheeks. "Oh Hopper, are you okay...?"

"Joyce..." he muttered, glad to see her again.

"Are you okay...? Are you okay...?"

He looked to see the nerd he remembered from high school and greeted rather casually, "Hey, Bob."

"Hey, Jim," he greeted back.

Finally, Terry cut the last vine that cuffed her leg, making her finally stand before she began coughing. The rest of the adults looked worried for her, Joyce getting away from Hopper to pull her into a quick hug. "Terry!"

"J-Joyce?" she questioned, feeling a little dizzy and nauseous.

She broke the hug to grab her shoulders. "Are you okay?"

She nodded a little. "I'll be...fine." She let out another cough, covering her mouth with her hand. She saw Bob and looked puzzled. "Bob?"

He tried to smile cheerfully at her. "Hey, Terry." She didn't think it was him helping her let go. Everything was blurry back there...

"Jesus, Terry..." Hopper said, Joyce looking back at him and moving away as he moved towards her. The two then enveloped into a hug. "I'm so glad you're alright."

"I'm glad that YOU'RE alright, Jim," she replied, her voice cracking.

Joyce looked a little puzzled, muttering, "Jim...?" She didn't think that Terry would call him by his first name. Plus, they were hugging like this. What...no, she shouldn't think that right now. For now, they were both alright and should get back up to the surface.

As Bob turned, he exclaimed, "WHOA!" The adults turned to see a man in a hazmat suit with a flamethrower suddenly. When the hell did he-

"Go! Go!" he yelled at them, gesturing them to get away. "Clear the area!" They did, Jim picking up his hat and running away with the rest of the adults.

---

On ground level, many of the lab personnel gathered around the crater, chattering. Both of the kids looked around nervously when Will suddenly let out a scream and fell to the ground, holding himself and moving around like he was in pain. Jane gasped and crouched down to him, grabbing his shoulder. "Will! What's wrong?!" He didn't answer her, still grunting and moving around in complete pain. Now she was extremely worried about him. "Will! WILL! Are you-"

He suddenly went stiff and began screaming without pause, his eyes rolled to the back of his head as he shook violently on the ground. She shot up and backed away from him, covering her jaw-dropped mouth and having her eyes filled with tears. Seeing Will like this...

It was just like when the shadow monster got him in the middle of the school field...but worse.

---

**And that's the end of this chapter. What do you guys think of**

this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?

Is it bad for me to be sad about what I write? 'Cause I made Karen's flashbacks a bit more tragic than Terry's in canon. I always felt terrible whenever I watch the flashbacks Terry showed El in the show, so...here...yeah. Also, you guys get a glimpse of Terry back when she was working there and married to Brenner. The poor women...

Poor Will too...now things get way more serious and Jane hates it.

Keep supporting this fanfic as you guys do and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

## 41. What Now?

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

The lab vehicles and others after them had came to a screeching halt when they entered the lab premises. Will, who was screaming in complete pain and crying, was being escorted to an emergency room by several doctors, Joyce and Jane following them and telling him that they were there for him. They hoped to God that he'll be alright. Jane had also hoped that her mama would be alright as well.

---

Terry and Hopper were brought to different disinfection rooms. She was bare-naked as two female workers in hazmat suits began to clean her, one spraying a water hose on her back and the other brushing the dirt and muck with a body brush. She grunted at the pain, but tried to pull through with it.

---

As they got into the emergency room and the doctors tried their best to treat Will, Jane looked completely horrified for him, almost about to cry. She covered her mouth with both of her hands as he yelled that it hurt everywhere. He had to be sedated, one of the doctors sticking a needle in his arm and injecting him. Joyce was crying, Bob hugging her to give her comfort. Jane just looked away, a couple tears being released before she wiped them away. It hurt her as it hurt Joyce to see him like that...god.

...

Later, while Will was knocked out, Jane and Bob sat near him, draped with blankets the personnel gave them. Jane sniffled a little, wiping her nose. The cheerful man looked at her and frowned, feeling very bad for her. He knew how close they were and how Will felt about her. He would feel awful to see her like this, like he was right now. "Hey," he said to her softly before hugging her to his side. She looked up at him as he continued, "I know you must be worrying a lot for him. I am too. But how about we keep our hopes up that he'll wake up the next morning and be alright?"

She really wanted him to be alright the next day since that must have been hell for him, so she nodded. "Okay," she replied as they both looked at him. Another person had also appeared on her mind. "I hope that Mama will be alright too."

He smiled a little. "From what I've seen, she's just as tough as Joyce. I never expected her to be like that since she was a shy nerd back in high school." He chuckled a little while she just grinned. "But that's a good thing. I believe she'll pull through." She smiled, happy to hear him say those words. Bob was always so nice, no wonder Joyce liked him.

---

With the spare tapes Murray had lying around, he and the two teens had created multiple copies of what Kali has recorded and shipped them to multiple news companies. It was a rather lengthy process, but they were finally done. This led them to celebrate with the watered-down vodka, each of them having one cup. Murray laughed and held up his cup. "To taking down the man," he happily proclaimed.

"To taking down the man!" the two teens repeated as they clanged their cups together and drank the watered-down vodka.

"Man, those commie bastards sure know how to make a spirit, am I right?" The teens set down their cups and got up, Kali grabbing her purse. The man looked confused and asked, "Hey, where're you two going?"

They stopped when they were about to walk off, looking down at him. "Home," Kali answered plainly.

"Yeah, our parents would-" Jonathan added before the man cut him off.

"Be proud if they knew what you guys were up to." Kali knew her mom was already proud of what she and Jonathan were doing, but they really needed to go. "Plus, it's getting pretty late. You can tell them you're at a friend's house and take the guest room or the sofa."

The auburn-haired guy looked down at his friend to see if she wanted

to stay, but her expression showed otherwise. She shook her head and replied, "No thanks. I mean, I really need to go home because my Mum and Steve-" She stopped the second she dropped his name, thinking she was stupid for saying it.

"Steve?" He then grinned and stood up. "Aaaah, the boyfriend, am I right?" He pointed a wagging finger at her while she looked a bit embarrassed. "You're pretty worried about him, aren't ya?"

That was something she couldn't deny, so she closed her eyes and answered, "Well, yeah-"

"That's why you didn't bring him with you and your platonic friend over here." Her eyes widened at that as he walked a bit closer. "You don't want him to get in trouble with you, so you left without telling him a single thing. Am I right?" The fact that he read her motives like a book kind of scared her actually. She should've expected it since he was a conspiracy theorist.

She looked away from him and didn't answer, which was the answer he needed, making him grin again. "Aaaand you seem to not fully accept yourself."

What? She scoffed and looked him again. "I do-"

"Not." She looked quite offended by what he said there. "I could hear it in your voice when you told me about Barbara. You sounded guilty, self-loathing of letting her die. You don't want anyone else to suffer from your mistakes again-ANOTHER reason why Steve was left behind." Again, she felt very uncomfortable having herself read like a book to him, especially since...well, he was right.

He spread his arms out and continued, "Well, guess what? You've done all of this work, so your friend's death wasn't in vain. That means you can cut the 'woo is me' bullshit, alright?" He then smiled. She didn't reply, but was processing all that he told her.

Jonathan just stood there, pretty much in awe at how good Murray was at analyzing people, kind of like him. The bearded man then turned to him. "Now it's your turn."

He was kind of startled that he was going to do the same to him now. "Me?"

He scoffed. "Course not, I was talking to the wall-yes, you." He walked towards him a little. "You're a bit more simpler than her, but I digress. You wanna go back to your mom and little brother, right?"

He nodded. "Yeah, of course-"

"Like this Steve is to Kali, they're pretty important, especially your little brother. Since you guys told me that your brother spent an entire week in this-" He used air quotes. "'Upside Down'" He stopped using them. "He's probably still deeply affected by the experience 'cause I'm pretty sure the Upside Down's not filled with sunshines and rainbows." The auburn-haired guy gulped, feeling just as uncomfortable as Kali was about being analyzed like this. "You wanna go back home ASAP to make sure he's alright, despite your absence." He was very right and it made him a little scared actually.

He grinned and looked at the two teens. "So, how'd I do?" Neither of them answered him, both being speechless by how impeccable his analyzation of them was.

...

The two teens exited out of the building, Murray holding the door with his shoulder as he handed Kali the bottle of vodka. "Here, for your travels..." he said as she grabbed it. He then handed the liquor that watered it down to Jonathan. "...and to water it down." He grabbed it, the two of them smiling.

"So...thanks for everything," the Indian girl said to him.

"Oh, don't thank me yet. Gotta keep your eyes on the papers, alright?" They both nodded at him as he continued, "And if you need to reach me again...don't bother." He then slammed the door and locked it, startling them both. He just did that like they were complete strangers. Well, they kind of were.

"Jeez..." Jonathan muttered before heading to the car. "Could've closed it more nicely, don't you think?"



Kali chuckled a little and headed to the car as well. "At least what's done is done."

"Thank God." They got into the car, Jonathan starting up the engine before they drove off back to their hometown.

"You can drive all night, right?"

"Probably. I don't feel tired." The two remained silent for a while, listening to the rock station that tuned up the second the car started. Then he suddenly stated, "Guy's nutty."

She grinned and looked at him. "What'd you expect from a conspiracy theorist? Subtlety?"

He laughed at that. "I mean...he's only known us for a few hours and suddenly, he's got us all figured out?"

It was pretty unbelievable, Kali looking straight at the road. "He's drunk...but he was probably right about you worrying about Will."

He scoffed, his smile disappearing. "No shit." He turned at the curb of the road they were on. "I'm his brother. I don't want to stress him out by being absent for too long." He paused for a bit. "Of course, you'd be worrying about Steve." She sighed and crossed her arms. "I mean, your mom knows what we're doing. What about Jane?"

"She thinks I'm at a friend's."

He nodded. "Okay, then that just leaves Steve." They were silent for a bit, then he asked, "This is probably a stupid question to ask, but do you believe in the rumors?"

That was a bit of a heavy subject to her. She looked at him and asked, "Do you?"

"Honestly..." He shrugged. "I think they're bullshit. Steve was an ass last year, but he sure as hell isn't now. From what I've seen, he'd never take advantage of you that way. Also, he looked pretty serious when I saw him carry you out of the party."

She thought he was right about Steve. He's changed and that was

good. Suspecting that he had sex with her while she was drunk was stupid anyway, as expected from the assholes that attended Hawkins High. "I don't think they're true either, but I still want to ask him about what happened that night."

"Yeah, that's a good idea." Right when she comes back, she'll confront him and ask him about what happened. If he still wouldn't answer, she'll find a way to force it out of him.

---

It was morning, but to Terry, that didn't matter because she was too busy throwing up bile in a bucket due to the air she breathed in the Upside Down. She was still in the decontamination room, now wearing a hospital gown the Lab offered to her and also having her hair down. She has been sick before, but this was the worst sickness she ever felt.

She heard the door open, making her slowly look back to see Dr. Owens enter in with Jim in a hazmat suit and carrying another one. He looked saddened to see her like this before the doctor said, "Teresa Ives. Think this is the first time we meet face-to-face."

"What do you want?" she asked in a weak yet irritated-sounding voice.

He chuckled at her response. "Straight to the point, I see," he muttered under his breath before telling her, "Well, Jim here's gotta present for ya."

The man walked to her and handed her the suit. "Dr. Owens needs to show us something," he said to her.

She looked a bit puzzled, rubbing her temple. "What is it?"

He shrugged. "Beats the shit outta me."

She sighed and glared sharply at Dr. Owens. "Could I see my daughter first? Is she still here?"

"Yes," he answered. "Your daughter's still here, but you and Jim need to see this right now."

She scoffed before standing up and putting on the hazmat suit. "Make it quick."

"You don't need to treat me like your ex, you know?" That made her and the police chief glare daggers at him. He visibly showed that he knew he shouldn't have said that, so he just looked down at his watch and turned around. "I'll assume you two are behind me." He then exited the room.

"Bastard," Terry muttered under her breath.

"Imagine talking to him every month," Jim replied, making her grin a little. "Let's go." They both then followed him.

---

They eventually went to the lowest level of the Lab, their hazmat masks on as they exited the elevator and saw Dr. Owens on a pulley weight with another employee, both also in hazmat suits. He pointed at the hole below the weight and warned, "Watch your step, you two." They both sighed as Jim got on the weight first, then pulled Terry onto it. The doctor then signaled one of the personnel inside of the mechanics room to lower them down and so they were descended into the hole. The woman felt slight vertigo from it, leaning on the man next to her, who wrapped his arm around her shoulders to keep her closer.

They were seeing darkness for a bit before the employee turned on the light on the weight. The two then looked at the hole in complete shock, Jim letting go as he and Terry leaned on the rails for a closer look. It was definitely more gigantic than before, having the former Lab employee in utter disbelief that this was the same one she entered into last year. "Oh my God..." she muttered under her breath.

"All living organisms developed defense mechanisms when they attack," Dr. Owens said to them. "They adapt, try to find a way to survive." This was one hell of a defense mechanism and it scared the hell out of the both of them.

The weight reached to ground, where most of the other workers were. The employee opened the door and let everyone out. Terry and Jim looked around, now more shocked at what they were

seeing...which were multiple entrances to the tunnels. "Jesus..." the police chief muttered.

"Pretty impressive, huh?" Dr. Owens continued. "It's been spreading and growing right underneath us like cancer cells."

"Then why aren't you burning it?" Terry asked.

He clicked his tongue and looked at her. "You see, there's a complication with that..." She and Jim looked at him once again as he pointed at her. "And it involves your daughter's friend." Her eyes widened more at that. Will was...?

---

In the emergency room, Will was still sleeping and Jane was sleeping as well, still wrapped around her blanket. Joyce was explaining to Bob what he needed to do since he was beginning to know everything, eventually realizing that Will really didn't get lost in the woods. "And Terry used to work here?" he whispered to his girlfriend.

She sadly smiled before it disappeared and she nodded. "Yeah...but she never liked it here. She didn't do anything bad here."

"But she still has to sign those documents?"

"Yes, especially since she used to work here." Man...and he only thought that this stuff only happened in comic books and movies and TV shows...

...

As they talked some more, Will woke up and called out to his mom, making Jane stir awake and look at him. She was glad that he was alright because...he didn't look so swell last night. Bob went out to call out for a doctor before coming back in and greeting him. However...he doesn't seem to recognize him, asking if he was one of the doctors. That made them all concerned. Why couldn't he recognize Bob...?

---

Jonathan managed to drive for about three hours before switching to Kali. Now they seemed to arrive back into Hawkins in the morning.

She smiled when she saw the welcome sign, glad to be back because honestly, she was getting tired too.

The radio was still on, now playing some talk show, while Jonathan was sleeping. She'd have to wake him up when she drives back to her home because she wasn't going to keep his own car.

They were getting up to the Byers house, but it was just to pass by. However, she noticed that there was no car parked there. That made her curious. Were they out getting breakfast? Maybe they were to cheer Will up.

...

Finally, they arrived at her home, Kali parking the car on the driveway. She unbuckled herself and shook her friend to wake him up. "Hey, sleeping beauty, wake up," she jokingly said to him. He groaned a little, beginning to stir awake. "I'm at home now. You can drive back."

He looked at her with half-lidded eyes and plainly replied, "Okay." He then yawned and unbuckled himself as well. They both got out of the car to stretch a little, the Indian girl coming right up to the front door and seeing the note on the door. She read it to herself, looking a bit concerned before shrugging. "Well, Jane should still be here, right?" she asked herself as she rung the doorbell again. Another minute passed and there was still no answer, much to her confusion.

After he was done stretching, Jonathan saw his friend continuously pressing the doorbell, making him walk to her. "No one's answering?" he asked her.

She groaned and stopped doing it. "Unless Jane's sleeping in..."

"Or at someone's house." That was also a possibility too. "Maybe mine's. She must be worried about Will." Yeah, that made sense, but...

"Actually..." She looked up at him. "I passed by there and saw nobody."

He looked pretty surprised at that. "What?"

She shrugged again. "I didn't see your mum's car, so I thought she was taking Will out to breakfast or something."

He looked away, muttering, "Probably with Bob." He then looked back at her and asked, "Well, what now?" That was a pretty good question.

What now?

---

Now in scrub robes, Terry and Jim followed Dr. Owens back to the emergency room to check up on Will. When they entered in, Will, Joyce, Bob, and Jane looked at them. The tomboy instantly got off of her seat and raced to hug her mom. "Mama!" she cried out, hugging her tightly as she looked up at her. "Are you alright?"

She smiled at her reassuringly and answered, "I am, don't worry, sweetheart."

Will watched this with a blank look on his face. He thought he could remember that woman's name...she was Jane's mom, right?

...

Dr. Owens shined a small flashlight on both of the boy's eyes before putting it away and asking, "You know your name?"

"Will," he answered plainly.

"Your full name?"

"William Byers."

He nodded a little. "What about me?"

He closed his eyes for a bit before opening them. "You're...a doctor."

Everyone who was watching felt very uneasy about this before he asked, "Have we met before?"

Will shook his head a little. "I...don't remember."

He frowned a little. "Huh, so you don't remember me?" He then nodded. "Okay." He pointed at Jane. "You remember this young lady?" Jane felt stiff that he now put her in the spotlight. Her friend looked straight into her eyes, so she nervously smiled and waved at him. "You know who that is?" He didn't answer right away, so he patted his shoulder. "It's alright, take your time, kid." The girl began to worry if he even remembered her, his first very best friend, at all.

Will's breathing became a little heavier, trying to know who that girl was and why he was feeling warm all of a sudden. He shouldn't. Everyone was looking...even "him". Then it hit him. "She's my..." he began to answer before trailing off. He was about to say crush, but he knew he shouldn't blurt that out, especially in front of her. "Friend...Jane."

The tomboy sighed in relief and smiled, glad that he was able to remember her. Terry, Jim, Joyce, and Bob were smiling too, the dirty-blonde-haired woman asking him, "How about me? Do you remember me, Will?"

It didn't take long for him to say, "You're Jane's mom."

She smiled and nodded a little. "Right, but do you know what you call me?"

What did he call her...? Her last name had to be the same as Jane's, but he couldn't even remember her last name, so he shook his head. Her smile disappeared, but she nodded again. Jane was worried again. Could he not remember their last name?

"And me, bud?" Hopper asked him. He looked at him, his face not ringing a bell to him, and shook his head again. "Y'know, the doctors told me-" He pointed at Terry. "-and her-" He dropped his hand to his side. "-that you saved us both last night. You remember that?" Nothing came up for the boy, so he shook his head again. Now everyone was worried about him again.

"You don't remember anything last night?" Dr. Owens asked him, the boy glancing. "Not even a little?"

Only one thing...one painful thing. "I remember...that they hurt me."

The parents, the police chief, and the curly-haired girl felt their blood run cold, remembering how he was screaming and thrashing around the night before.

"The doctors?"

He shook his head. "The soldiers."

"The soldiers hurt you?" None of them remembered them being near him at all...

"They shouldn't have done that. It upsets him." Their blood continued to run cold. He wasn't acting like he was before...

The old doctor pulled out a photo of Will's drawing of the shadow monster and showed it to him. "Is this 'him'?" The boy nodded again. Everyone felt more uneasy than they did before. It was like...he was possessed by it.

The doctor put the photo away and said, "Okay. Lemme try something." He opened up a folder and continued, "It'll seem a little odd at first, but I think it's really going to help us figure out what's going on." He placed a hand on his shoulder. "Is that okay?"

He nodded and answered, "Okay."

...

Later, one of the personnel reeled in a chopped off, yet live vine from the Upside Down on a cart. It was encased in a glass box that was open. As the door closed, Dr. Owens told Will, "Now, you're going to tell us if you feel anything, alright?"

He nodded once again and said, "Alright."

Everyone watched as the scientist lit up a lighter and slowly hovered the fire over the vine. It screeched a little and squirmed. Everyone saw that Will's heartbeat hasn't changed. The old doctor asked the auburn-haired boy, "You feel anything?"

He gulped a little and answered, "It stings a little."



"Stings? Where?"

The fire got closer to the vine, making it screech and squirm around even more. That made him suddenly grasp on his chest and groan out, "My chest!" Joyce and Bob were quick to come to his side and comfort him. The old doctor gestured the scientist to keep getting the fire closer to the vine, so he did, the vine screeching more.

"How about now?"

"It...burns!" The instant the fire touched the screeching vine, he went stiff and screamed a little, his heartbeat rising quickly.

"Where-"

"Everywhere!"

Everyone looked scared as the fire continued to torture the vine, torturing Will in the process. "That's enough!" Joyce shouted to the scientist.

The vine hit the glass, cracking it as Hopper yelled, "You hear her?! That's enough!" He still kept at it.

"WE'RE TELLING YOU TO STOP *RIGHT NOW!*" Terry also yelled, now the scientist pulling the fire away. The boy's heartbeat gradually went back to normal as Joyce whispered things to him in a soft voice. The dirty-blond-haired woman sighed and grabbed the bridge of her nose, shaking her head. "You guys haven't changed at all..." The scientist going onto torturing the vine and Will like that...it gave her bad nostalgia of working in this place.

Jane heard that and felt both sad for Will and angry at the scientist for going on with burning the vine despite the protests. Maybe they really haven't changed since Mike...

...

Outside of the room, Dr. Owens told most of the adults, "Our best guess as of now is that he's infected with some sort of virus that's causing this...neurological disorder. Now, typically...when a virus attaches itself to the host, it duplicates, alright? It spreads, eventually

hijacking its host." Joyce began to cry, but was quick to wipe it off. "A virus is alive, it has an intelligence. That's not unusual." Now Joyce looked at the ground, her eyes brimming with tears. Both Terry and Jim felt sorry for her. "What IS unusual here is that this virus...it seems like it's making Will communicate with other infected hosts. There seems to be this hive intelligence going on with the virus and its connecting all the hosts." Jim ran a hand through his hair in frustration, Terry crossed her arms and sighed heavily, and Joyce looked up at the doctor with watered eyes. He gave her a reassuring look. "Now, the good news is that a virus can be cured. We're gonna continue running tests and we're gonna what we'll find." That didn't come off as good news to them at all though.

"Wh-what happens when he can't...remember anything?" Joyce asked in a somber voice. "Wh-when there's nothing else there?" She moved closer to her, her voice now almost a sob. "Wh-what's going to happen...when my boy...is gone?" She then began to cry and sob, making both Terry and Hopper feel absolutely awful for her. The man gave her a side-hug to comfort her while her friend placed a hand on her shoulder and gently squeezed it. Dr. Owens just stood there silently, not answering her as he got a solemn look on his face.

---

**Stopping right here. What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**I hope you guys liked the change with the scene with Murray. Instead of him looking through Kali's relationship with Jonathan (because they ain't interested in each other in this fanfic), he pretty much reads them off like books. Also, they get to leave earlier than in canon, but only to see that no one else is around...**

**Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

## 42. It's A Trap!

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

On the railroad, Dustin and Steve were dropping pieces of meat on there to lure Dart out to a certain place. "Wait, so let me get this straight," the teen told the boy. "You kept something you knew was probably dangerous JUST to impress some girl you just met?"

Dustin scoffed and answered, "Okay, that's REALLY oversimplifying things."

"Well, why'd you think some girl would like some nasty slug anyway?"

He looked back at him. "An inter-dimensional slug? Come on, it's awesome!"

He sighed, now by his side. "Okay, and she didn't think it was cool?"

The curly-haired boy shook his head. "Not from what I've seen, no."

He scoffed at him. "See? You're just trying too hard."

Dustin frowned. "Not everyone can have your perfect hair, alright, Steve?"

"It's not the hair, man. It's..." He trailed off to think about what to tell him. He thought of telling him that he shouldn't act like he cares when it comes to girls to make them crazy, but he wasn't a douchebag anymore, so that was shitty advice to give to a kid.

"It's...?"

What else to tell him...what else to tell him... "It's the charm."

The boy gave him a weird look. "Charm?"

"Something that's...y'know, appealing to them."

He grinned a little and dropped more chunks of meat. "Like your hair?"

Again with the hair...he shrugged and dropped a couple chunks of meat. "Sure, but it doesn't stop there. Could be some part of your appearance or even your personality."

"Personality?"

"Yeah."

Dustin sighed and looked at the ground. "I dunno if this girl is gonna like MY personality..."

That bummed the teen out a little, so he told him, "I'm just gonna tell you straight up, kid. Not all girls are the same."

"Well...I know, I'm friends with a girl."

Oh yeah, Jane, Kali's tomboy little sister. He almost forgot he was friends with her. "I know about Jane, but listen to me." Dustin looked up at him. "I'll be honest with you, some girls won't be attracted to your personality."

The boy frowned and looked down. "Okay..."

"But others might."

He looked up at him with a surprised face. "Really?"

Steve nodded. "Yeah, really. I think other girls can find your personality charming." Nerdy girls do exist, so he wasn't lying to him.

The curly-haired boy nodded. "Uh-huh..." He wondered if Max finds his personality charming, but if not... "What about my appearance?"

The jock looked down at him. Blue eyes...curly hair... "Maybe your eyes or your hair, if you do it in a certain style."

"What certain style?"

"Like..." He tried thinking of male celebrities with curly hair like his,

theirs styled...similar to his straight brown hair. That's why he pointed at his own. "Like this, but curly."

"Oh." Steve still had that perfect hair while his...not really. He sighed and asked, "So...if this girl finds me charming, somehow, then what do I do?"

What would he do...the teen answered, "You just get to know her better and with time, you'll feel it."

"Feel what?"

"This..." He couldn't come up with better words at the second, so he said, "It's like before it's gonna storm, y'know? You can't see it, but you can feel it. It's this...uh..." He finally came up with the word for it. "Electricity."

The boy thought he got it. "Ah, like the electromagnetic field when the clouds in the atmosphere-"

Yeah, nerdy girls would LOVE him, he knew it. He shook his head and stated, "No, no, no, no, like this...sexual electricity."

He looked a bit surprised, but nodded. "Oh, alright."

He grinned and pointed at him. "You feel THAT, then you make your move."

He smiled a little and asked, "That's when you kiss her?"

That question alone was enough to make him stop. "Whoa, whoa, whoa, slow down, Romeo."

Dustin stopped and frowned. "Sorry."

He sighed and the two continued venturing on forward and dropping their pieces of meat. "Let's go back to all girls not being the same. Some girls like for you to be aggressive, so going in for a kiss isn't that bad for them." The curly-haired boy nodded again. "They like it strong, hot and heavy, like a...a lion. For others though, you'll have to go slow and stealthy, like a...I dunno, a ninja."

This made the boy curious. "So...which type is Kali?"

Kali...at the moment, that name brought Steve the mixed feeling of sadness and joy. She still wasn't around, not to his knowledge, but... "Kali's different, WAY different the types of girls I told you about."

Dustin looked down and said, "Yeah, I guess she's pretty special."

He smiled a little and replied, "Yeah, she is."

This conversation reminded him of before they were dating. After his last breakup with What'sherface, he wanted to change up his love life a little by dating a pretty girl that wasn't white. He knew about Kali, so he tried the "Pretend-you-don't-care" tactic on her to woo her. That tactic had worked on the girls he hooked up with before, like a charm. She kind of reacted to that like any other girl he's dated before, but little did he know that she also used the same tactic on him. How she knew about that was beyond him, but like how he was driving her crazy with it, she was driving him crazy with it too. That was why their first kiss was a make-out session. Thinking about that made him grin.

"...something about her," Dustin continued, Steve unaware of what he just said due to his thoughts.

"Wait, what?" he asked him.

"I'm just saying that there's also something special about this girl, y'know?"

That made him concerned and stop again, the boy doing the same. "Hold on, Henderson."

"What?"

"You're not falling in love with her, are you?"

He asked that with a not-so-accepting face, so that prompted Dustin to shake his head and answer, "No, no, of course not."

He nodded and the two continued walking and dropping the chunks of meat on the tracks. "Good, don't."

"I-I won't..."

"She'll break your heart and you're too young to go through that shit, okay?" Dustin only nodded and the two continued doing what they were doing. The jock saw the look on the boys face, making him feel a little bad. He probably thought he had no chance with this one girl, huh? He was just warning him. Maybe he could cheer him up by...oh God, he'll have to tell him that if it meant cheering him up.

He'll have to tell him the secret to his perfect hair.

---

Terry and Jim were in his police car, using Morse code to try and connect to Mike. Terry told her daughter that she'll be in the bathroom so that she wouldn't get suspicious. Both looked very forlorn since they've left him alone for a couple days (or so they thought). The man got frustrated and leaned onto the wheel, releasing a deep sigh. The woman sighed as well and gave his shoulder a gentle squeeze. "Jim..." she whispered to him softly. "We can do this. We just need to pull through, like...in those vines."

He looked at her, seeing that she looked just as sad as him right now. Since they were both like parents to the poor kid, it's to be expected. He nodded and straightened up. "Okay...we'll talk to him through the radio," he replied, her nodding back. He pressed the talking button on the speaker he had in his hand and spoke, "Hey, buddy...it's, uh...it's me..."

He hovered the speaker to Terry, who spoke into it, "And me, sweetie. We're both here." He was about to pull it away from her, but she held his wrist, telling him to keep holding it to her. She took a deep breath and continued, "Listen...I know we've been gone for too long and..." She took another deep breath. "It's not because of you or...our fight, okay?"

She gestured Jim and he spoke into it, "She's right, kid. We're not gone because of you or the fight..."

---

The cabin was completely empty, the words spoken through the radio disturbing the quietness. "...okay? *Something came up and got the both*

*of us involved, so...I...we'll explain it once we see you again."* There was a pause. *"We're not mad, okay? Neither of us are."*

---

Both being near tears, they both said, "We're sorry..." They looked at each other in a bit of surprise, but then exchanged glances and continued, "About everything."

Terry gestured Jim to hold the speaker to her again, him doing so as she said somberly...

---

*"We...we don't want you to get hurt at all, Michael. We don't wanna lose you."*

There was another pause before Jim said, *"We would never forgive ourselves if anything happened to you, Mike."*

---

The woman wiped her impending tears while the man sniffled. "Just...make sure you heat up some real food, not just Eggos."

Terry got close and said, "No eating ice cream either, okay?"

"Eat all the peas, even if they're gross and mushy, and..." He sighed before she finished for him, "We'll be home soon." He let go of the button and put the speaker back in its place. He wiped away his tears and sniffled again, muttering, "I hope he's doing alright..."

"You and me both..." Terry replied somberly as they both hugged each other once again, trying to comfort one another in this situation.

---

The doctors were taking so long that Joyce went to get past the guards, them holding her back as well as Bob. Jane frowned at that situation, hoping things will get better soon. She looked at her friend and saw him just staring blankly into space. Though it looked like that, the heart monitor was steadily increasing its beeping, so she thought he was doing more than just staring into space. She nudged him a little and said, "Will? Will?" He tensed back a little before looking at her, trying to hide this feeling that makes him warm whenever he saw her. "What's going on? Are you hurting again?"



He shook his head at her and answered, "I...saw something."

"In your now-memories, right?"

He nodded at her, laying on his side now and shaking just a little. "The shadow monster...I think I know how to stop him." That gave the tomboy more than relief to hear. Everything can end now...

---

Kali and Jonathan have went all around town, but saw none of their family members anywhere. They haven't given up hope since the idea of using Will's walkie-talkie at home came up. They drove to the Byers home and got out of the car to get inside. Jonathan opened the door and they both got inside. Instantly, they all saw the drawings and looked shocked. "Holy shit..." the auburn-haired guy muttered.

"What the hell is all of this?" the Indian girl asked.

He shook his head and shrugged. "I don't know...this all wasn't here when I left." They continued to explore the entire house before reaching to Will's room, seeing that the weird drawings nearly spanned across the entire house.

When they got inside Will's room, they saw the walkie-talkie on the boy's desk. "There we go..." Kali murmured before she became the first to grab it and pull up the antennae.

Meanwhile, Jonathan spotted a well-drawn, yet creepy-looking shadow monster with red lightning behind it. That made him worried before spotting a piece of a camera on the ground. He recognized it right away. "Polaroid."

His friend looked back at him with a puzzled face. "What?"

He looked at her and waved the piece up a little. "This was on the floor, but I don't shoot Polaroid." He put it in the pocket of his jacket, looking worried as hell. "Someone else was here." Her eyes widened, realizing what could have happened to them...

"Should I...?" She pointed at the walkie-talkie.

He sighed and shoved his hands into the pockets of his jeans. "Let's

try. Best case scenario, Jane's hanging out with Lucas and Dustin." She nodded before looking at it again.

---

In the junkyard, Dustin and Steve have met up with Lucas and Max. Dustin and Lucas talked about what the black-haired boy told the redhead and the curly-haired one conveniently finding Dart, but eventually reached to a truce. As they were getting prepared to intercept Dart before dark, Dustin's backpack, perched on the side of the bus next to Lucas's, made a whirring sound and a muffled voice was heard through it. Unfortunately, everyone was so busy getting prepared that none of them noticed the sounds.

---

"Hello?" Kali said into the walkie-talkie. "Can anyone hear me? It's Kali. I wanna know where she is." She stopped and listened for an answer, though she and Jonathan got nothing but static.

She handed the walkie-talkie to Jonathan and he said into it, "It's Jonathan. Can anyone hear me? Over?" He got nothing but static. "Kali and I need to know where our siblings are, over." Still nothing but static. "Anyone?" Still nothing. He sighed and shortened the antennae. "Nothing."

She groaned and muttered, "Shit!"

"That only leaves one option..."

She nodded, saying, "We need to go back to the Lab."

---

In the meeting room with the rest of the doctors, Jane, Jim, Joyce, Terry, Bob, and Will were in there, the auburn-haired boy looking at the photos people from the Lab took last night. One doctor was skeptical of this, saying to the old one, "This is ridiculous, Sam."

"Just give him a moment, will ya?" he replied to him bitterly.

"We don't have time for-"

"Hey, jackass, do us all a favor and shut up, okay?" Jim told him, the doctor thankfully keeping silent. Terry would nag him about

swearing in front of the kids, but she'll let it slide since that guy really needed to shut the hell up.

Will stood up and moved around to find one specific set of photos. Dr. Owens followed suit as he saw him point at the set of pictures, all making one large center. "That's it."

Everyone else looked at the photos he was pointing at from where they were before Dr. Owens asked, "That's what, Will? What's...what's there?"

He shook his head a little. "I don't know, but..." He gulped. "I know he doesn't want me to see there. I think...it's important." That gave the personnel all they needed to start up an investigation.

---

Later, in the lowest bunk, Terry and Jim stood next to Dr. Owens as they saw the personnel in hazmat suits go onto the trolley and lower themselves down. Eventually, the camera on one of them turned on before the rest did, showing the environment of the Upside Down. The radars were on and the sketch of the drawing Will pointed to was in front of one of the workers. "Well, let's see if this kid's right or crazy, doc." The old doctor saw the two adults look worried and do things a worried person would do, Jim rubbing his face and Terry placing her fist on her lower lip. Neither of them were ready to expect the unexpected, but they had to, so that Will can be alright and this "shadow monster" can be defeated.

...

During some time, the three adults looked carefully at the video being shown, though it was beginning to glitch out and hearing the soldiers. They've finally reached to...that place...that place Jim and Terry were at. They both looked shocked and leaned forward to the footage, Terry saying, "Oh my God, that's the place."

Dr. Owens looked at her with a confused face. "What?"

"That's where Terry and I were at," Jim answered. "That damn graveyard..." If that was the place the shadow monster didn't want Will to see...

*"There's nothing here, sir,"* one of the soldiers said through the patch radio.

The scientist in front of the radars looked at the head doctor and told him, "Looks like your kid's full of shit, doc." Before he or the other adults could retort, they all then suddenly heard low growling from the radio. Then in the video, fog began to show up, making them all look closely at the screen.

---

In the emergency room, Will was laying on his cot, Jane at his side, Bob right next to her, and Joyce at the other side. The boy's face suddenly looked somber as he muttered, "I'm so sorry..."

The tomboy looked up at him, a bit puzzled. "What?"

"H-hold on, what do you mean, sweetie?" Joyce asked him, looking very worried.

He began to shake and stutter out, "H-he made me do it..."

His mom stood up and gently grabbed the side of his arms as his eyes were welling up. "Who made you do what, Will?" Jane was thinking about it, then came a frightful realization.

"I-I told you...they upset him...they shouldn't have done that...they shouldn't have done that."

Jane's eyes were wide and her breathing became uneven as she said, "The spy..." Will was crying and sobbing, breaking both her heart and Joyce's. However, that was just it. She sprung out of her chair and exclaimed, "The spy!" She then ran out of the room before anyone could stop her.

---

Another scientist in front of another set of radars looked back at the lead one and stated, "We got movement." The radar showed several red dots approaching the soldiers...several, perhaps a dozen.

The lead scientist grabbed his microphone and told the soldiers frantically, "You've got company, guys!"

---

Jane ran to the guards and yelled, "Let me through!"

The guards prevented her from going through, one of them saying, "You know we can't do that, kid."

"PLEASE, I have to warn them! It's a trap! It's a TRAP!" Suddenly, Bob grabbed her from behind to prevent her from going on through. She struggled though and her eyes began to water. "IT'S A TRAP! IT'S A TRAP!" Her mom was down at the bunk. If anything ever happened to her...

---

There was overlapping shouts heard from the radio, more and more red dots being very close to them. "They're RIGHT on you!" shouted the lead scientist on the microphone. The overlapping chatter grew louder, the worry everyone in the room had skyrocketing. Then suddenly, a loud growl was heard...and one of the videos turned to static. Gunfire and screams were now heard through the radio as well. Jim and Terry now began to feel terrified.

---

Jane continued yelling that she needed to tell everyone that it was a trap, but then she heard Will yell, "It's too late!" She and Bob looked back, the girl releasing some tears. Too late...? It couldn't be...that meant that her mom will be...

---

One by one, the soldiers were mauled, all of the videos turning to static. Now the adults looked horrified. The two looked closely at one radar with the dots. The red ones continued going forward...the dots representing the soldiers not to be seen. "Jesus..." muttered Jim. They both then looked at the hole, running to take a closer look.

---

Bob and Jane got back into the room, now hearing Will say, "They're almost here."

She sniffled and wiped away her tears, muttering, "Mama..." Bob gave her a gentle hug to comfort her, though her mom and Hopper were in danger.

---

Everyone in the tech room kept silent, Jim and Terry looking around the outside of the room, expecting whatever were those red dots to appear. They were completely scared, but they had to be ready, just in case.

And then, a hand appeared from the hole and grabbed one of the edges. A creature with the head of a Demogorgon came up from it and released a screech. Everyone couldn't believe it...they were here...

This was the perfect trap they fell into.

---

**Done! What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed? This is a more shorter chapter than usual, but that's because there's a little less to change than usual. I still hope you guys enjoyed it nonetheless!**

**So I changed Steve's advice to Dustin in this one. I did that because he's becoming less of a douchebag, thanks to Kali, so yeah. Hope you guys don't mind that!**

**Poor Hopper and Terry, worrying about Mike like the parents they are to him...**

**What will happen to everyone in the Lab...? Well, we'll find out after the Mike-centered chapters coming up next! So, review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

## 43. N08

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

*"Mom...it's me...Michael. I'm here."*

*"No."*

---

*"Breathe!" Karen remembered Nick yelling. She remembered being escorted on a cot...was it for Nancy or...*

*"The ambulance is on its way!" she remembered Giana also yelling.*

*"It's going to be alright, darling," one of the doctors told her that one time.  
"Stay with us."*

*Two flashes of both of her children crying as newborns appeared as she then saw Nancy's drawing and remembered her saying, "I drew a sunflower!" Sunflower...*

*She remembered her siblings, John, and Jen holding her back before a nurse gave her a sedative before remembering the last two moves for the combination. Four to the right...two to the left...*

*She remembered a gunshot, then the rainbow. Rainbow...*

*Then her ex-husband saying, "Four-fifty." Four-fifty...*

*Many images flashed into her mind so fast...breathe...sunflower...rainbow...four to the right...two to the left...four-fifty.*

*"MOOOMMYYYYY!" she remembered that girl yelling...sunflower...four to the right...two to the left...breathe...four to the right...two to the left...*

*Sunflower...rainbow...breathe...four to the right...two to the left...four-fifty.*

*Breathe...sunflower...rainbow...four to the right...two to the left...*

Mike gasped and removed the sleeping mask from his eyes quick, his nose bleeding as well as his mom's. "Breathe...sunflower...rainbow," she muttered. "Four to the right...two to the left. Four-fifty." Now that he had seen everything, he knew why she was muttering those words. The adults around him were quick to hug him and say comforting things to him after such an intense experience...

...

All of them were in the kitchen now, the blood from the boy's nose wiped away and Nick asking his nephew, "So then it just repeated?"

He looked a little confused, never hearing of that word before. "Repeat-ed?"

"Like it kept going in a circle," Jen answered him.

"Yeah, you keep seeing the same thing over and over again," John added.

He nodded, looking solemn as he told them all, "She kept showing Nancy."

All of their eyes widened, Nick's and Giana's watering. "N-Nancy...?" Giana asked in a shaky voice.

He nodded again. "She was still...alive. I was with her. We were in the room together." Their breathes hitched, his aunt beginning to cry, making him feel sad.

"Th-the rainbow room?" He remembered the painted rainbow next to the door of the room they...and Terry, were in, so he nodded. Giana began to break down, her husband letting her cry on his shoulder for support. Nick sniffled and wiped his tears, his wife hugging him for the same reason.

"Well...what did she look like?" he asked him.

Mike felt deeply sad for the both of them, but remembered what she



looked like. Her light-brown hair was longer than when he first saw her and she was a bit taller. "Older."

His uncle sniffled again, rubbing his nose. "How old...?"

He tried to think. "How old was she...when she..."

"Four."

"A little older, then." Nick looked down and rubbed his face, looking very depressed as Jen whispered things to him.

Giana looked down with her pink eyes still streaming some tears and sniffled. "Those bastards..." she muttered under her breath.

John rubbed her hair and whispered, "It's okay, honey-"

She got away from him, giving him an angry look. "It's NOT okay! Those men have LIED to us about my sister's children! How the hell is that OKAY?!"

Nick looked at her with a somber face and replied, "Listen, Gia, I'm JUST as pissed off as you are, but let's just keep ourselves together for Mike, alright?" She sniffled again and looked at the boy in question, who looked just as forlorn as everyone else was. She sighed deeply and took a deep breath.

"I'm sorry, Mike."

He shook his head at her. "It's okay." He tried not to cry himself as he realized something. "I think this is why Mom wanted to talk."

Giana wiped her tears and sniffled once again. "To...to show you Nancy?"

He looked at his mom back in the living room, still rocking on her chair, muttering what she always muttered, and looking at the TV so blankly. He didn't think she showed him all of that just to prove that he had an older sister. He looked back at the adults and answered, "I think she wants me to find her."

...

Mike came upstairs with his aunts and uncles before Nick opened the door to Nancy's room. They all entered in, the boy looking around at all the soft pink that coated the walls. Everything seemed so tidy and there were a few stuffed animals on her bed and her drawers. Giana grabbed one picture of Nancy and talked to the rest of the adults about whether or not this was a good picture of her. Once they've all agreed, she handed him the picture. He took a good look at it. It was just Nancy herself outside, probably near here, having some of her long hair pulled back as she wore a pink, long-sleeved shirt, a blue skirt, knee-high socks, and black Mary-Janes. She was smiling in the picture and her hands were behind her back.

"I'm giving you this picture so that you have a...reference to her, okay?" Giana said to him. He looked up at her and just nodded.

...

He got the sleeping mask on again as he sat on her bed and tried to reach her. The adults were silent as they saw his nose bleed. Suddenly, he looked frustrated and took it off, sighing heavily and looking at the adults. "Did you find her, Mike?" Nick asked him.

He shook his head and answered with a frown, "I'm sorry." The adults looked saddened by this, making him feel worse. However, Giana got close to him and rubbed his arm.

"It's okay, sweetie," she said to him softly. "Can you find her again?"

He shook his head once more as he looked down at the picture of Nancy. "I'm...tired."

The adults nodded, Nick saying, "Okay, bud." He stood up and continued, "Where'd you like to lay down? I mean, I could say that you can rest in...your sister's room, but..." He chuckled a little. "Pretty sure you don't want that." Mike actually agreed with him on that. It looked too...girly for him.

...

Eventually, it was nighttime. Mike had woken up in his mom's room, still having the picture of Nancy in his hands. He sighed and held the

picture up to look at her again. This girl was supposed to be his older sister, right? Maybe that's what screwed him up earlier, since she was younger when this picture was taken. He took a deep breath and placed the picture on his chest, closing his eyes and trying to reach to her. Flashes of the rainbow room came to his mind before he saw Nancy happily playing with him when he was extremely young. He had taken a better look at her face, smiling as she handed him a large green toy. She giggled at him when he was playing around with it before looking up at Terry, possibly. And with that...

---

*He finally got there, opening his eyes and seeing the darkness. He heard fire popping and moving, making him turn back to see someone with short and shaggy platinum-blond hair look over it. He looked puzzled. She didn't look like Nancy, but...he'll have to try.*

*He walked towards her slowly and said, "Hello...?" The stranger didn't respond in any way and continued looking over the fire. He gulped and then asked, "Nancy?" He finally got close to the stranger, seeing from behind that she wore a black leather jacket and gray skinny jeans. When he got close, she looked back, the boy seeing the pearly-white skin and sky-blue eyes of his sister with ashy-black eyeshadow.*

---

His eyes shot wide-open, the boy gasping hard as his nose bled only a little. He found her...he finally found her. He knew his aunts and uncles would want to hear this.

He got out of the bed and ran out of the room, shouting, "Aunt Giana! Uncle Nick!" He then ran across the hallway. "Uncle John! Aunt Jen!" He stopped yelling when he heard the adults yelling downstairs. He felt tense, but wondered what they were yelling about. He slowly went downstairs, the yelling becoming more clear to him.

"...don't know, John!" Giana yelled.

"How the hell are we going to know where she is if he finds her?!" John yelled back at her.

"I DON'T KNOW, JOHN!"

"CALM DOWN, YOU TWO!" Jen shouted at them. "Can we not wake Mike up by yelling?" He heard all of the adults sigh before he finally went to the entrance of the living room and peeked over, seeing that his mom was still watching TV while the adults were in the back.

Nick rubbed his face and said, "Well, we can't call the police because they'll think we're lunatics."

Giana nodded. "Right."

"There's still the case of knowing where Nancy IS when Michael finds her with his...power. We have no idea if he could SEE where she is." The boy frowned at that.

"We can just ask him when he wakes up, okay?" Jen suggested to him. He sighed and rubbed his temples.

Suddenly, Giana's eyes flickered. "Wait...maybe we can call the police." That made the boy's blood run cold while the adults, especially Nick, looked shocked at his suggestion.

"Are you CRAZY, Gia?"

"Nick, listen to me. Remember when the police chief and those two women visited us last year?" His look of shock dissolved as he nodded.

"Yeah...they tried to talk to Karen and asked us about Mike and Nancy."

She nodded. "We could call them. Maybe they'll help us track Nancy."

"If Mike can't see where she is," Jen stated.

John sighed. "Can we trust them though?"

Nick glared at him. "That police chief showed his badge and ID. I'm sure he can be trusted."

While the adults came to an agreement, Mike felt so...awful. Hopper and Terry have been taking care of him for a year. To have them call him to help...no. They couldn't. This was his new home...right? It was

so weird to him that he was now having mixed feelings about calling this place home. His mom was here, his aunts and uncles were nice to him, and he even has a little cousin. But...for some reason, this didn't feel all that homey to him. Why?

He looked at his mom, who was still watching TV and muttering what she usually muttered, and whispered, "I'll find her." She stopped her muttering, but kept her eyes on the TV. Suddenly, he noticed the adults close to him, making his breath hitch. However...they walked right by him like he wasn't there. He was completely puzzled before he looked at Karen again...seeing her nose bleed a little. He looked very shocked at this, but then remembered that she had another power to make herself disappear...maybe she did that to him so he could go and find Nancy. He thought she couldn't do that due to her condition, but she still communicated with him through her mind, so...

He sighed in relief before seeing a light flicker to the front of the door. He followed that and went to the coat rack, seeing a couple purses and hung up with a coat. He looked around, making sure none of his aunts and uncles were around, and then dug into one of them. He pulled out a brown wallet and opened that up to see Jen's driver's license and some money. He grabbed the money before digging into the other one, pulling out a red wallet and opening it up. It had Giana's driver's license in it as well as some more money, so he got that out. He then grabbed his jacket and his bag, putting them on. He shoved the money and the picture he had of Nancy into his bag before opening the door and leaving.

...

The adults upstairs, going to get the slip of paper Hopper gave Giana, stopped when they heard the door open. They all looked back with wide eyes, Jen asking, "What was that?" Suddenly, they assumed the worst, that Mike was leaving...alone.

"Shit!" Nick muttered under his breath as he and the rest of the adults ran back down. They all shouted off-sync, "Mike!" They kept calling his name, Nick looking out the front door and the others looking around the place.

The blood dripping down Karen's nose continued going down, now past her lips, as she muttered, "Four-fifty. Breathe...sunflower...rainbow." Just then, "Action News 8" came on, the "8" put on emphasis and twirling around.

---

Michael had eventually tracked her the way he did and got on a bus to Chicago. He sat alone and close to the window, looking through it as it rained a little outside. Though he was going to Chicago, he had no idea where exactly to go when he gets there, so he looked at Nancy's picture and closed his eyes again. She was in front of that trash fire, right? He eventually saw a dim and mucky community of dirty and homeless people. So he needed to go through there.

Once he would get through there, then he would see a dirty, graffitied building. Inside that building were four other strangers: an African-American man with a long black braid warming his hands over the fire, a guy with a blonde and red mohawk with dark tips looking over it, an African-American woman with large fuzzy hair sitting on a stool with a hunch and looking at it as well, and a girl with punk-rock hair smoking and sitting down in front of it. Nancy, the girl with the short, bleached hair, went up the stairs with a little girl with long blonde hair in pigtails, wearing a pink, long-sleeved shirt and small dirty jeans. That's what the interior looked like and she wasn't alone...just like his mom.

He opened his eyes and wiped the blood coming down his nose. He knew where to go and what to expect. He took a deep breath as the bus crossed the Illinois-Indiana border, hoping that this will all be worth it.

---

Once the bus stopped in Chicago, the freckled boy put the picture back in his bag and got up to get out with everyone else. He stepped onto the sidewalk and looked around. He was awed at how bright the city was and how big the buildings were. However, he needed to find Nancy, so he took a deep breath and walked the way to the slums.

As he was walking, he walked past many adults, young and old, and faked a smile to blend in with them. He walked past a couple of cops, not getting into eye contact with them and going about his business.

He passed a group of people to a building with art inside. He walked through a crosswalk and looked up at one large building. He never thought buildings would be so big. He smiled as he noticed that he was getting close to the slums.

Suddenly, a man in a suit bumped shoulders with him hard, making him stumble back and look at him. "Watch it, dumb kid," he told him rather aggressively.

He glared daggers at him and said, "Mouth-breather." He then looked and moved on forward into another crosswalk.

...

He got near an abandoned shop before looking to see if there were any cars coming. When there wasn't, he crossed the road and finally entered into the slum he was supposed to go through. A bunch of dirty and homeless people were there, doing things like warming themselves up near a trash fire, smoking, talking, and just minding their own business in their tenants. Mike honestly felt so tense and uncomfortable being here since some of these people were looking at him, some intimidating.

Some got out of his way before he reached to a maniacal man that was laughing. He looked at the boy straight in the eye and said in a singsong voice, "They're deeeeeead~." He walked past him quickly as he continued laughing. "They're dead! They're all DEAD!" He laughed very hard, making him run to get out of this place. It didn't help that what he said made him feel more anxious than before.

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Finally, he walked up from the car tunnel and saw the graffitied building not too far from him. He gulped and approached it slowly. There were a bunch of strangers in there, so he had to be prepared. When he reached the door, he opened it and got inside. The interior was just as graffitied as the exterior was and he heard people, possibly the strangers he found in his vision, talking. He closed the door behind him and walked through.

He finally saw the strangers still around the trash fire, enjoying each other's company. "Maybe you can do stand-up, Axel," the girl with the

punk-rock hair told the guy with the mohawk. "I think there's a spot about, like, a few blocks away." Mike's anxiousness began to rise with every step he took, wondering if he should say something to the strangers or not.

Suddenly, the guy called Axel noticed him, looking eyes with him and grinning. He stopped, seeing the rest of the strangers look at him. His anxiousness rose once again. The guy grinned, putting his hands in his pockets and saying, "Well, well, well...what do we have here?"

The girl with the punk-rock hair began to rise as the African-American woman got off the stool and asked, "What's he wearing?" She walked with Axel, looking over Mike's appearance, and continued, "You some kind of nerd?" That made a couple of the strangers laugh. He looked puzzled, not knowing what that last word meant.

"Listen, nerd, there isn't any sciencey stuff to discover here," the girl with the punk-rock hair told him. "So you can go on back to your school now."

He sighed, walking towards them slowly, and told them, "I'm looking for my sister."

Axel circled around him and teasingly asked, "Aww~, you're looking for your sister, Carl Sagan?" Of course, Mike had no idea who he was. "That's soooo sad..."

Now he was feeling irritated by him, but he continued, "I saw her here."

As he dug his hand into his bag and grabbed the picture, the African-American man stopped crossing his arms and said, "Ah-ah-ah!" The freckled boy stopped. "Hand out of bag, slow." He gulped, feeling a bit intimidated by how he presented himself.

He did take out the picture slowly, as commanded, before Axel said, "Gimme that shit." He snatched it away from him and looked at it, his grin disappearing. "What the hell...?"

The African-American woman looked at the photo as well and looked



both shocked and curious. She grabbed it from him and stated, "Looks like a younger Nancy."

Mike nodded. "That is Nancy."

Everyone looked up at him with wide eyes, Axel's having a sharpness to them. As the woman showed the two other strangers the photo, Axel asked, "How'd ya find us? Who else knows you're here?" He got closer to him, but he stood his ground.

"No one," he answered.

He scoffed. "So what then? Ya do some nerdy shit and POOF! Ya come here with a picture?"

"Axel, stay calm," the fuzzy-haired woman told him. "He's just a kid."

He looked back at her. "Yeah, a kid that can get us all killed!"

"Didn't Nancy say that she had a little brother?"

"Yeah, but does he look ANYTHING like her?" The woman didn't answer before he faced the boy again. "Let me tell ya something, Carl." He then let out a pocket knife, making him stiff as he got more closer to him. He stepped back. "I'll ask again and if I do it again, you'll start losing things." He pointed the knife right at him, making him more tense. "Maybe I can get ya a little haircut first." There was no way Mike was letting him hurt him.

"Ax, come on, put down the knife!"

He ignored her. "How...did you find us?!"

Mike clenched his fists, concentrating his mind as he answered, "I saw her here."

He then aggressively grabbed him by his collar, the fuzzy-haired woman exclaiming, "AX!"

He ignored her again and yelled, "That's not an answer, you little shit!" This would mean he had to fight back somehow. Suddenly, he saw him looked shocked at his knife before looking down at his arm.

He then looked terrified and exclaimed, "JESUS!" He threw his knife down, continuously screamed, and frantically moved away, wiping...something from his body. "GET OFF! SHIT! SHIT!" The punk-haired girl looked amused by this, the African-Americans looked at each other in concern, and Mike had no idea what he was doing, looking very, very confused.

Suddenly, a girl's laugh caught everyone's attention, looking up to see no other than the girl with the short and shaggy bleached hair leaning on the railing. Not only was she wearing the leather jacket and skinny jeans Mike saw her in, but she also wore a white tank-top underneath the jacket and black combat boots over her jeans. Mike gasped...knowing that was Nancy herself.

"You still need to work on your dancing skills, Ax," she told the guy with the mohawk as she descended down the stairs.

He looked pretty mad at her and slapped the side of his head. "I told ya to STAY OUTTA MY HEAD, Nance!"

As she reached to the ground floor, she walked towards them. "So, we're threatening kids now? That's great..."

Axel pointed at Mike and stated, "He knows about you and thinks you're his sister." She looked concerned.

"He had this," the punk-haired girl told her as she handed her the picture. She examined it closely and looked very surprised to see her younger self. She then looked up at the boy, who walked closer to her. Black hair, brown eyes, freckles...plus, a weird feeling in her gut...it could be him. At the same time, she was never the one to take a statement as truth straight away.

"Where did you get this?" she asked him.

His heart was racing due to finally meeting with his own older sister. Even so, it seemed like she didn't recognize him. He tried to relax himself and answered, "At Mom's."

"Your mom gave you this?"

He shook his head. "She showed me you..." He pointed at the picture.

"...in our dream circle."

Axel scoffed at that and scratched the back of his head. "Dream circle?" Sounds like a schizo to me."

Dream circle...it did sound crazy. "Who gave you this?"

He sighed. "Aunt Giana." Her eyes widened at that name.

"Aunt Giana?"

"What, ya know that name, Nance?" Axel bent down to pick up his pocket knife, but Mike looked at that and used his power to have it fly right to his hand. That surprised everyone, especially Nancy. "Holy shit..." He just did that with his mind, right...?

He looked at the knife and slowly bent it back down, looking at his sister again and handing it to her. "I saw you. We were in the rainbow room together." She grabbed the folded knife from him and still looked surprised. She scanned his face again. Again, black hair, brown eyes, freckles, pale skin-plus, his mind power...she hasn't seen him since he was, what, a toddler? Only one thing could really prove to her that it was him, that this boy was her long, lost little brother.

"Show me your wrist." He nodded as he rolled the sleeve of his jacket and showed off his branded tattoo to her.

M11.

She gasped, feeling a wave of different emotions crash onto her. She smiled as she pulled down one of her gloves a little and showed him her branded tattoo, "N08". He saw and read, "N-O-Eight."

She chuckled a little. Her eyes began to water as she continued smiling. "Michael."

He looked up at her, feeling so relieved that she knew it was him now. "Nancy." She then pulled him into a hug, him returning it. She sniffled and kept her hug for him tight. In that moment, no one around them mattered because they were finally reunited as long, lost siblings, and they were beyond relieved that one another were alright.

---

Stopping here. What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?

Nancy finally makes a full appearance! I was waiting to get to here (well, this is ONE of the things I've been waiting to write out), to get to where Mike reunites with Nancy! Hope I wrote their reunion well! They deserve it.

The poor Bertuzzis though...they've only known their nephew for less than 24 hours and he's left them...but it's for good reason.

So, Axel calls Mike Carl Sagan. I heard he was popular back then, so I decided to have him call him that because of his appearance.

Can I tell you guys something? When I first finished this chapter, I thought it was weird that I was reaching the limit with the Wheeler siblings reuniting. So, to make sure I had no pacing issues, I wrote the rest of the episode in three more chapters. All seemed to reach close to the limit too, so that means everything's evenly paced. That meant that I can finally release this chapter without any worry! That also means I have the rest of the chapters for this episodes done too, but I'll just release them every two days so that everyone gets the time to digest one chapter.

With all that said, follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

## 44. This is Your New Home

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Telling the rest of the gang to keep an eye on "Holly", whoever that was, Nancy sat with Mike up on the roof, talking about his experiences. "So, these memories our mom shared...the last one, that's the last you saw of me?" she asked him.

He nodded and answered, "Yes."

She nodded, knowing that he was only two back then, so he couldn't have remembered everything. "And how long were you living with this policeman and..." She sighed, taking in the fact that this woman was not only mostly a good person, but took care of him as well. "Terry, the woman that looked over us?"

"Three-hundred and twenty-seven days."

Nancy laced her fingers together. "And they both think that they can work some kind of deal with those guys to set you free?"

He nodded again. "Yes. They kept saying, 'soon'."

She scoffed. "Pretty naïve for a couple of adults to think that." She leaned forward to him. "We'll always be seen as nothing more than monsters to them, understand?" He nodded again. "And let me guess, they both don't allow you to use your powers, right?" He nodded as she grabbed his hands. "Mike, what you can do is amazing. It makes you very special."

He smiled at her and thought about something. "You...have a power too, right?"

She nodded. "Yeah. It's much different than yours, but our mom had it, so...it got passed onto me." He remembered the vision where their mom made herself invisible to get in the Lab and then her making him invisible to the adults so he could find his older sister.

"Is that why you made the guy with the weird hair dance?"

She giggled at what he called Axel, but she nodded again. "Yeah. Axel's not a big fan of spiders, so..."

He grinned a little. "You made him see spiders?" She just nodded at him, making him chuckle a little. Him seeing spiders made him dance like that. Honestly, to him, that was kind of funny.

"But it doesn't have to be scary," she continued. She let go of his hand to close her fist. She then opened it and revealed a beautiful butterfly with color-changing wings. He looked awed at that. "This pretty butterfly isn't real. I convinced your mind that it is." The butterfly then fluttered out of her hand and circled around Mike. He moved his hand to grab it, but it went through it. "You can't touch it either." She then grabbed the butterfly and opened her palm to make it disappear. "I can and it will disappear. Think of it as some sort of magic." To him, that was a very cool power to have.

"Are you real?"

She giggled and nodded. "Yeah, of course I'm real." Just to make sure, he poked her at the face a couple of times. She smiled again and got his hand away from her face. "I'm REAL, Mike. Trust me."

He laughed a little and replied, "I was just checking." They both continued to smile at each other, enjoying each other's company.

Suddenly, the door opened, revealing the African-American man holding the little girl Mike saw Nancy carry up before arriving to Chicago. "Sorry to intrude, but your daughter here wants to see Mr. Mike." The boy wondered why he called him that, but that thought was overshadowed by the fact that he called the little girl Nancy's daughter.

Nancy stood up from the box she sat on and walked towards them. "Of course. Thanks, Funshine." She then grabbed and held her daughter, the man leaving as she approached Mike with the girl on her arm before setting her down.

"Who is he, Mommy?" she asked, pointing at the freckled boy.

She smiled at her. "That's your Uncle Mike, sweetie," she answered

her. Both her and Mike look very surprised. He was...her uncle?

Nancy saw the look on his face and said, "You must be very surprised." He nodded at her. "Well, this cutie right here..." She paused to pat her head. "...is your niece, Holly." Niece...? He had to process that. He and Nancy were siblings and Holly is Nancy's daughter...he guessed that's what kids of siblings were called.

Holly smiled at him before walking to him and hugging him. "Uncle Mike!" she said to him happily. He smiled back at her and hugged her back, feeling all fuzzy inside about the fact that he was an uncle.

He then looked up at his sister and asked, "Does she have a power too?"

She nodded and answered, "Same as mine." It made sense since she was her daughter. The hug was released from the both of them as Nancy told her daughter, "Hey, show Uncle Mike what I taught you last night."

She nodded at her and looked at the ground. Mike did the same before he saw a flower grow out of the concrete. He looked awed and reached out to grab it, but the hand got through it. Holly giggled as her nose began to bleed a little. "It's not real, silly!" she told him as she made the flower disappear into the ground.

He laughed a little and stated, "I know. Still pretty." His sister also laughed a little as well.

---

The three went back inside the building. Mike was in a room where Nancy told him he could stay in while she and Holly got upstairs to their own respective "bedroom" to change the little girl and tuck her into bed. The teenager then grabbed a laundry basket with a blanket in it and went up to her little brother's room. He sat on the mattress and saw her come in with a smile. She grabbed an orange blanket from it with one hand before placing the basket on top of a file cabinet. She handed it to him and sat down on a chair in front of the mattress with watered eyes. This made him worried, him asking her, "What's wrong?"

She shook her head and answered, "Oh, nothing's wrong, it's just..." She took a deep breath. "I've always wanted to find you again. I've always felt so...horrible for leaving you behind when I escaped." His eyes began to water as well as she leaned towards him and laced her fingers together. "I've made so many plans on how to break into the Lab and get you back. At the same time, there were thoughts in my mind that maybe you escaped and..." She sighed, shaking her head again as a couple tears were let out. "I don't know. I told everyone, even Holly, that I wanted to find you again someday. You appearing tonight..." She held his hands once again as she kept her smile. "It's more than I could have asked for. My little brother is back in my life again. I feel whole again." Hearing that, he let out a couple of tears as well, but also smiled.

"I think Mom sent you here for a reason," she continued. "She knew that the both of us belong together." She sniffled a little. "This is your new home."

Again, the word hit him hard. But maybe it was, since he was back with his sister and she always wanted to see him again. After all, she was a nice girl. "Home."

She nodded. "Yes...home."

...

After he fell asleep, Nancy went upstairs to the second floor, pulling out the picture of her younger self out. The rest of the gang were downstairs, the punk-haired girl and Funshine gambling, the African-American woman keeping a lookout, and Axel practicing knife-throwing. All of them were listening to the police scanner before they all saw Nancy arriving. As Axel missed the target and cursed under his breath, he got it and asked her jokingly, "So, how's your nerdy little brother?"

Her glance to him was sharp, but she smirked and answered, "Oh, he's just fine, you ugly-ass punk." He just scoffed at that insult.

The African-American woman, whose name was Mick, got off of the movable stairs she sat on and said, "Well, at least he's back in your life again and we don't have to risk our tails to go and find him."



"Could've been more fun if we did though..." the punk-haired girl, Dottie, muttered.

"You must be very happy, Miss Nancy," Funshine said to her.

She nodded at him and smiled. "Yeah, more than happy, actually. I'm overjoyed."

"So, what? He's got the same power as you?"

She shook her head. "No, it's actually different."

The entire gang looked puzzled. "Different?" Mick questioned.

She nodded at her as she approached the table Dottie and Funshine were sitting at. Mick and Axel got closer to them. "I told you guys that my little brother was different. Our mom had three different powers: I have one, he has the rest." She then set her picture on the table. "That's how he found me with only this."

Everyone looked at the picture, the fuzzy-haired woman looking up at her and shrugging. "What's that mean?"

"He can find people without moving, with just a picture."

The gang looked at each other before the guy with the mohawk rolled his eyes and asked, "So you're sayin' your little brother's some human radar detector or some shit?"

"Or some shit," she answered. "Specifically, telepathy."

He looked at her in disbelief. "There's no way, Nance. Telekinesis, sure, saw it with my own two eyes. But telepathy?"

"I have a strong feeling that's it. We'll just have to see." She then paused, thinking of something. "How about we do another one tomorrow?"

Axel and Mick gave her disapproving looks. "Ya can't be serious, Nance," he told her.

"Yeah, we're WAY too hot right now," Mick added.

"Paranoooooooooiiiiid~, " Dottie sang, grinning.

She glared at her. "REALISTIC." She then looked at the blue-eyed teen. "They don't look the other way when you kill their men. If they find us, they'll release hell on us."

Nancy gave her a serious look. "So what then? We go hide, giving into fear?" None of them answered, the two that spoke to her looking the other way. "I'm tired of it. You guys know I am. Plus, he's in pain. He needs this." She then grabbed her photo off of the table and walked to the bedroom she shared with Holly. "We go out tomorrow, no exceptions." Not only was her little brother back after so many years, but he could also be useful for her long-term mission. Maybe they could bond a little during the mission, even him and Holly. Her cute, little daughter definitely deserved to know her uncle more.

As she disappeared from the gangs' sights, they all resumed what they did before, this time with a little hesitation from Nancy's decision. Axel sighed and muttered, "Swear to Christ, Carl Sagan might get us all killed." He then threw his knife again, hitting right at the center of his target.

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*While Mike was sleeping, he saw nothing but darkness. However, he suddenly heard voices...two very familiar voices. "Hey, buddy...it's, uh...it's me..." Hopper said in a somber voice.*

*"And me, sweetie," Terry also said in a voice matching Hopper's. "We're both here." He turned around and saw the radio back at the cabin, walking towards it slowly since he still felt bitter about the two adults. "Listen...I know we've been gone for too long and..." She paused. "It's not because of you or...our fight, okay?" His eyes widened. Not only were they not at the cabin, but they weren't gone because of him? Or the fight?*

*"She's right, kid. We're not gone because of you or the fight...okay? Something came up and got the both of us involved, so...I...we'll explain it once we see you again." The boy felt many emotions hit him while hearing this before hearing them both say, "We're sorry...about everything." He looked saddened, still feeling the many emotions he had hit him. They sounded like they really meant it, making him feel something...new. It was like...he missed it at the cabin...like he missed them.*

*Before he could hear more of what they have to say though...*

---

A small hand was nudging him, making his eyes shoot wide open. He looked at who was nudging him and saw Holly herself on the bed next to him. Her hair was down and she wore a navy-blue shirt, the dirty jeans she wore the night before, and small white socks. "Hi, Uncle Mike," she greeted him with a cute smile.

He smiled back, feeling relaxed and a bit better from seeing his little niece. "Morning, Holly," he greeted back. Out of the blue, she hugged him again, making him hug back after seeing something like that. She was such a nice little girl.

She released it as Mike asked, "Where's...your mom?" He was close to saying Nancy, but he remembered that she was his sister's daughter.

"Mommy is down the stairs. She told me to get you up." He kept smiling at her as he got off of the bed. She did, but carefully so that she wouldn't get hurt. "Mommy says your gift is different."

He nodded at her. "Yeah."

"What is it?"

He didn't know how to exactly explain it, so he decided to demonstrate it to her by looking at his bag next to the mattress and tilt his head down. She looked at it and he managed to make it move straight and up into the air. She gasped and walked to it, watching it float right over her head. "Wow..." He dropped it right next to him, wiping the small drip of blood from his nose. "You made it float!"

He laughed and replied, "I did."

The little girl then grabbed his hand and pulled him forward. "Come on, Mommy's waiting."

"Okay."

He let her drag him out of the room and she slowly walked down the stairs with him. Nancy was waiting at the bottom, wearing what she wore yesterday, but now with a gray long-sleeved shirt underneath

the leather jacket. When they reached to her, she patted her daughter's head and said, "Good job, sweetie."

"Thanks, Mommy," she replied happily.

The teenager girl then looked at her little brother. "Had a good rest?"

He didn't, but he decided not to tell her that and instead ask, "Is it morning?"

"It's late, actually. But that's fine." He nodded at her before she said, "Well, it's time to meet the rest of the gang-PROPERLY, this time." She then gestured him to follow her, him doing so while Holly held her mother's hand.

They went inside what looked like an office, Axel holding Chinese takeout and telling the teen, "We need to get some money, Nance. I can't stand eating this garbage all the time."

She scoffed and said to Mike, "That lovely guy is Axel."

"The spider hater?" the freckled boy asked, making Holly giggle and the fuzzy-haired woman laugh. The guy in question gave her an ironic look of smugness.

Nancy grinned and answered, "Yep, the spider hater." The girl with the punk hair then waved at the boy as his sister continued, "That's Dottie, our newest. She left home, just like you."

"Ya mean the looney bin," Axel chimed in as he threw the Chinese takeout away.

Nancy then looked at the African-American woman sitting at the table of empty Chinese takeout, Mike doing the same. "That's Mick, our eyes and protector." The woman mentioned just looked at the boy and tilted her head up as a greeting. The bleached-haired girl then had him look at the African-American man. "And that's Funshine, our muscle." He approached the boy, making him feel scared because of how he looked and how tall he was. She giggled at his reaction and assured, "Don't worry. He's not scary to people he likes. He's just a big ol' teddy bear." It made him feel more better now, especially since he gave him a friendly smile.

"A pleasure to meet you, Mister Mike," he greeted, holding his hand out. Since he was taught how to shake hands before, the boy did so with him. He turned his hand upwards.

"Yeah, if you're looking for a number, you won't find one," Nancy told the man as she seated Holly in front of an open box of Chinese takeout before sitting on another chair, still looking at her little brother.

"They're not like us," he stated.

She nodded. "Right, they don't have powers like us. However, they're outcasts like us."

He never heard of that word before. "Outcasts?"

"Freaks," Axel simply elaborated from him, sitting at the table with the rest of the gang.

"Speak for yourself..." Dottie mumbled, twirling a piece of her unruly hair.

"Society left them behind," Nancy continued. "They hurt them, discarded them, viewed them as nothing more than garbage." That made him frown.

"They are not garbage," Holly chimed in, everyone smiling at her as she ate the takeout.

"She's right," Funshine stated, pointing at her and looking at the telekinetic boy. "We were all dead, but Nancy saved us." He pointed at his head. "Here..." He then pointed at his heart. "And here."

Nancy chuckled at that and said, "That's so cheesy, Fun."

He chuckled as well. "But it's true."

"She helped us, now we help her," Mick said, pointing at the blonde-haired little girl. "And little Holly."

Axel leaned close with a beer can in his hand and told the boy, "In this life, kid, ya either roll over or fight back." Fight back...

"We're ALL fighters here." But...

"Fighting...who?" he asked them.

...

Later, after breakfast, Nancy and the gang got a number of IDs and dropped them onto the table. Holly was out of the room, roaming around but staying close to the gang's proximity. "All these people you see here are in some way responsible for what happened to us," she explained to Mike.

He took one ID and looked at it. It had a Caucasian man with brown hair and a matching-colored mustache. He looked at his sister and asked, "You hurt the bad men, right?"

Dottie gave him the stink-eye and sarcastically answered, "Nah, we just give them a pat on the back." The entire gang remembered the night they murdered that man in the ID. It was the night they went into an apartment building and Nancy shot him dead, leading to them escaping from the cops and her making one of them think the bridge collapsed.

From the looks of everyone, Mike reached to a conclusion that made him feel very uncomfortable. "You...kill them?"

She shrugged. "They're simply criminals that need to pay for their crimes. We make them pay." With wide eyes, he looked down at the man in the ID, wondering if he was killed. He WAS a bad man though...

"Jeez, Carl, ya look like ya've seen a ghost," the guy with the mohawk said with a grin.

"We all can't be fighters, I guess," the punk-haired girl stated.

He looked up at them and said, "I'm a fighter. I've killed people." He has cracked two necks of two different workers and crushed quite a few soldiers' brains to not only save him and Jane, but also Lucas and Dustin.

Nancy couldn't help but having a corner of her mouth quirk up,

almost liking that her little brother has killed before and asking, "And did the people you killed deserve it?"

He nodded at her. "They hurt me." He could still remember being dragged away, crying and screaming for his dad and the doctor, and being thrown in the dark room like he was, like she said before, garbage. They have also tried to hurt Jane too...but he shouldn't think about her now.

"And they'll still want to hurt you, hurt me..." The teenage girl sighed. "Even Holly if they knew she had my power." She then made hovered her hand across the whole gang. "They'll even want to hurt them too. We're just getting the upper hand, being one step ahead of them." She tilted her head to the left and said, "Follow me." Wondering why, he did so, the two exiting the room.

---

They walked together outside, Mike still following his older sister. "I was just like you once, Mike," she told him.

He looked up at her with a puzzled look and asked, "How?"

She looked solemn and answered, "I've always bottled up my anger and frustration. I tried to hide from it, but..." She scoffed and shook her head. "It just kept eating away at me. It's like a wound that keeps festering."

That last word made him puzzled again. "Festering?"

She looked at him for a bit before looking forward. "It spread and it felt...so awful." He nodded in understanding before they both reached to a small set of steps and went down. "But when I confronted it, I began to heal. I don't feel trapped in this pain anymore, I freed from myself from it." She stopped and looked at him again. "You understand that?"

He did, completely, making him nod. "Yes."

"Good." She then looked at an abandoned, graffitied train car and asked him, "You see that train car?"

He looked at it and answered, "Yes."

"Pull it towards us." He gave her a weird look, but she gave him a serious one. He sighed and looked at the train car. He tilted his head down and held his hand up, bending them like claws as he used his power to pull it towards him and Nancy. The metal was creaking, his hand getting more shaky as he strained himself to get it moving. The train car made a loud creak sound before it began moving just a little. He strained himself even more to make it move faster, now his whole body shaking. It moved back and forth before he couldn't take it anymore and stopped. It creaked a little when it bounced.

He panted and closed his eyes, placing his hands on his knees as blood dripped from his nose. "I can't..." he muttered, wiping the blood off with his finger.

Nancy crossed her arms, determined to make him move it. "You told me last night that you flipped over a van once." He did because it was coming right for him and...the rest of the group.

He opened his eyes, straightened up, and nodded at her. "I did..."

"Those assholes were trying to take you away again and that made you pissed off, right?"

"Pissed off...?"

"Really angry, furious." That made sense, complete sense, actually.

"I was."

She nodded at him. "You should. Find that anger and focus on it. Don't worry about the train or its weight, just focus on the anger." Find his anger and focus on it? Honestly, that sounded way too hard for him...but he'll have to try since Nancy told him to do so to pull it.

He took a deep breath, tilted his head down again, and raised his hand up to pull it for the second time. "Find something from your life, something that angers you...a lot." It didn't take him long to remember spotting Will trying to ask Jane out to the Snow Ball...he saved him last year and what did he do? Tried to ask her out to it and made her blush at one point. Not only that...

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*"The Snow Ball's next month, right?"*

*"...I was wondering if we could go there..."*

---

Plus, when he threw him...Jane reacted in a way he never expected.

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*"Will, wait!" she cried out in worry, running down the stairs. "Will!" She pushed open the exit door and left to go after him.*

---

It was all because of him that he wouldn't get close to Jane again...

"Channel it." He gritted his teeth, looking angry as the train began to move, its wheels skidding the concrete. The teenager moved closer to him and said sternly, "Dig deeper, Mike. You were lied to your whole life..." He was...

---

*"Do I have a mother?" he asked Hopper and Terry one night when they were reading "Anne of Green Gables" to him.*

*"She...she's gone," Terry answered him. "She's not around anymore."*

*"She's gone?"*

*"Yeah...I'm sorry."*

*"We both are, kid," Hopper added.*

---

That was a lie. His mom wasn't gone, she was alive.

The train car moved a little faster, Nancy continuing, "You were imprisoned, by friends and enemies." He remembered all of those horrible times he got thrown into the dark room in the labs...and being trapped in that cabin because Hopper and Terry wouldn't let him out.

---

*"Hey! Hey!" Hopper swung the door wide open. "Don't walk away from*

us!"

*"You are NOT going to survive out there if you keep it!" Terry yelled at him.*

*"Yeah, you need to GROW UP! You wanna go out in the world?! THEN GROW UP! GROW THE HELL UP!"*

*And the boy himself screamed and broke the windows when he couldn't take it anymore.*

---

He got more angrier by remembering that very argument, pulling the train car a bit more faster. "These bad men-these assholes-took your home...our home...our mom!" Nancy looked like she was about to cry when she said that. A flash of their mom having her brain shocked immensely instantly appeared in his mind. Then he remembered her being dragged away by security...

---

*"No, NO! LET ME GO! LET ME GO! THEY'RE MY CHILDREN!" she yelled at them, struggling.*

---

His angry stare got a lot more intense and his nose began to bleed again. "They took everything away from you, Mike, just like they did with me!" She remembered her dad and that bastard doctor appearing in her room one night and using a chloroform rag to knock her out to bring her into the Lab. Then a couple years later, her mom being taken away right before her eyes...

---

*"NO, DON'T TAKE MOMMY AWAY!" she cried out before security got her and Mike. She reached a hand towards her. "MOOOMMYYYYY!"*

---

"They stole my life and your life! I will NEVER forgive them for that and you won't either!" She was right...he could never forgive them...especially his dad and the doctor. They only used him and treated him like an experiment, not someone with feelings. They've treated him wrong...thrown him into the room for a long

time...torturing him...scaring him when he found the Demogorgon and screamed.

He had began to scream now, the train car being completely pulled towards him and his sister. When it was at a good distance, he stopped, making the train car stop as well. He sunk into his knees, placing his arms on the ground as he felt his brain hurt from doing something like that. As much as his head did hurt from doing that...he suddenly felt like a weight was off his chest now...it was a good feeling.

He heard whoops, cheering, and clapping, making him look up to his right to see the gang, including Holly being carried by Mick. They all looked amazed and overjoyed by what they've seen him do. "Yay, Uncle Mike!" Holly cheered to him. He couldn't help but feel warm inside about seeing that.

He sat down on the ground, Nancy sniffing and chuckling a little before crouching down to him. "Sorry, got a bit carried away there," she said to him. "How do you feel though?"

Honestly... "I feel good." Nancy was right all along. Hiding his anger is painful, but letting it out seemed to heal that pain. Not only that, he was able to do something he's never done before: move something very large. The van was big, but the train car was much bigger...and he moved it. He honestly felt proud of himself for achieving that.

---

**Done! What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**Holly makes another appearance! To be honest, it's pretty weird for me to write her as Nancy's daughter/Mike's niece in this AU, but it separates it from the canon and it makes more sense for me than leaving her out completely in this AU. I hope I wrote her talking well since I have no idea how a four-year-old talks (I mean, I didn't talk all that much when I was four, so...).**

**So Mike hears Hopper and Terry apologizing to him...what will he think of that later on...?**

Since they're siblings, after all, I think it's very reasonable for the both of them to get pretty emotional over that while Nancy's pep-talking Mike into moving that train car. After all, both lost their mom in a way...

Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

## 45. Bitchin'

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Back in the office space, they got into a room inside that space where a large mirror had many pictures, news articles, and notes taped onto it. Mike took a good look at it as Nancy stated, "These are the 'bad men', the ones we believe are alive, anyway." She then went to one picture with a younger Terry Ives in it, her smiling and being next to Brenner, and took it off the mirror. "Just to clarify, Mike..." He looked at her as she showed him the photo of Terry and Brenner, pointing at the woman. "Our observer. She's the one with the police chief?"

He looked at her and answered, "Yes."

"Now, she doesn't work in the Lab anymore?" He nodded. "And she doesn't even like them?" He nodded again. "Do you know why she left?"

He remembered her mentioning it to him at one point. "She didn't like what they were doing."

"That's why she quit?"

"Yes."

She sighed and proceeded to put it in the pocket of her jeans. "With that out of the way, do you recognize anyone else here?"

He looked back up at the mirror of pictures and scanned the whole thing. Most of the people in the pictures didn't ring a bell to him...except one. He saw a picture of the bald and bearded man from before on a news article titled, "Retired!" He got it off the wall and answered, "Him." Nancy looked at the picture of him with nothing but hate in her eyes. Mike did as well. "He hurt our mom."

She nodded. "Right. His name's Ray Carroll...and he's done more than hurt our mom." She remembered one time with him...

---

*She was still six and now wore the hospital gown every subject had to wear. She looked scared and got cornered by Ray, who was holding a taser rod and approaching her. "No...please-" she begged before he got her shoulder with the rod, stunning her with the electricity with an evil smile on his face. She screamed at the pain.*

---

She crossed her arms again. "Bad men like Ray know about us, so they become hard to track. With you though..." She looked at her little brother. "That won't the case anymore."

Feeling just as hateful for him as she was, Mike crumpled up the photo.

...

Now sitting on the ground floor, the gang, including Holly, kept silent as their radio released static and Mike was blindfolded with Funshine's bandana to find Ray. They all waited for him to finally do the job, Axel holding a can of beer he got from the office space. The freckled boy then ripped the photo in half, dropped the pieces to the ground, and removed his bandana.

"Did you find the bad man?" his niece asked him. His only response was a nod as his nose bled a little.

...

After being told the address to Ray's location, Dottie found the phonebook the gang have been using to find their victims and sat on the ground, opening it up. She bit her lower lip as she slid her finger across one page. It stopped and she read out loud, "Gramercy Apartments, Washington and Bethel." She handed the phonebook to Nancy so she could look at it. "That's it, right?"

She read that quietly to herself before saying, "It's at some place called Lilburn." She looked at her friends. "Where's that?"

"An hour east," Funshine answered.

Mick raised her arms up and down. "We don't even have a new ride," she stated.

The teenage girl looked at Axel, who was sitting next to Mike now, and asked, "We got plates, right?"

He nodded and answered, "Yeah."

She then looked at the African-American woman. "Then we swap plates." She shrugged. "Problem solved."

"Sure, but it's risky." She walked away from the group and walked up the stairs she usually sat on.

Nancy grinned. "Nothing's really fun if there's no risks involved." Mike became curious about that, looking concerned. Nothing's fun if there's no risks?

Mick grumbled, "Not setting a good example for Holly..."

She looked at her again, now smirking. "Normal people would say I'm not setting a good example for her, but she's still fine." She then played with her daughter's hair and looked at the rest of the gang. "Come on, let's make my little brother's first day exciting." Exciting?

"I'm in," Funshine replied, smiling at the boy. "For Mister Mike."

Axel grinned and shrugged. "Yeah, sure, why the hell not?" It was already a given that Dottie would be up to the task, considering who she was. Everyone else looked at the fuzzy-haired woman. "Mick?"

She looked up at the ceiling and began to grin. She looked at everyone else and shrugged, saying, "Screw it!"

That was cue for everyone to stand up and move around to their respective places. Mike stood around as he saw Axel and Funshine open up a safe to get everyone's weapons. Nancy suddenly grabbed his shoulders, making him look at her and her smile. "Time to get you a new makeover," she told him.

"Makeover?" he asked, not knowing what that word meant.

She should have known that a makeover was a foreign concept to him since he was a young boy. "You'll look different than you are now." She then whistled at the guy with the mohawk and called out,

"Axel!"

He turned to her as he cocked his pistol. "Yeah?"

"Pick out some new clothes for him, will ya? I'm gonna go do his hair."

He nodded and put the pistol in his back pocket. "Not a problem."

She then looked at Holly and said, Stand by Auntie Mick, okay, sweetie? Mommy and Uncle Mike will be right back."

The little girl nodded at her. "Okay, Mommy." She then walked to Mick. The teenager then gestured him to follow her upstairs to his "bedroom".

...

She had gotten into the drawers in the room to get out some hair products to do his hair with. She sat him down on a chair and told him, "Lean back." He did so as she removed her fingerless gloves, squeezed out some hair gel on one, and rubbed her hands together. She then used her gel-covered hands to get his hair back. He tensed up at the feeling of that, making her say, "Stay still, this won't hurt at all." It didn't...though the feeling it gave him reminded him of...whenever Hopper did his hair-

No, he shouldn't think about him right now.

Just then, the guy with the mohawk got into the room, carrying a pile of clothes and accessories for Mike to wear. "Here's the shit ya need to wear, Carl," he stated as he placed them on the bed.

Nancy gave him a rather disapproving look. "Mike, Axel."

He gave her a smartass look. "I know, Nance." He then left.

She sighed and shook her head. Mike moved his head to look at Axel leaving, but his sister moved his head back to where it was before. "Don't move your head, Mike."

He sighed and replied in a rather irritated tone, "Okay..."



...

After she completely styled his hair, she left the room so that he could change into the clothes Axel provided for him. Afterwards, he looked at a mirror that was in the room to look at how he looked. His hair had feathery bangs that swept to the left side of his face and was swept down from the back like a mullet. He wore a plain white T-shirt underneath a black, studded, unbuttoned leather jacket, gray jeans with a black belt, and black combat boots that surprisingly fit him. He also wore black spiked bracelets and a silver necklace. He actually kind of liked this look.

He got out of the room, catching Nancy's attention when she was leaning near the doorway. She smiled at how he looked before they reached to the ground floor and showed everyone else how he looked. The gang looked approving of his new look, nodding their heads and Axel looking mildly impressed. "You actually don't look bad, Carl," he said to him.

"Yeah, you look bitchin'," Dottie added, crossing her arms and leaning against the table.

"Bitchin'," Holly also said, smiling.

Nancy went to her and said, "Sweetie, you're not old enough to say that word."

She then frowned. "Sorry."

She gave her a warming smile. "It's okay."

Bitchin'...from the sound of it, it was a compliment to him, like 'cool'. He nodded and smiled a little, repeating, "Bitchin'."

...

After that, everyone got outside and walked to the van, Holly holding both Nancy's and Mike's hands. Mick smoked and carried a brown bag with her while Dottie carried another bag, this one being a yellowish-brown. They got to the vehicle, which was covered in tarp. The guys removed it, Axel switching the plates not too long after. Everyone got into the van: Mick took the driver's seat, Axel got the

passenger's seat, and everyone else was sitting in the back. They then drove off, passing a couple of cops arresting the man. Little did they know that one paid close attention to the vehicle...

---

As they were on the road, the radio was on a rock station, playing "Dead End Justice" by The Runaways. Mick blew out smoke while Axel and Dottie were rocking out to it, the punk-haired girl slamming her hands on the table back there to imitate the drumming. Nancy, Holly, Funshine, and Mike smiled at them having fun, though Mike had never seen anyone do what they did before.

Nancy and Holly got out masks for him to try on. The bleached-haired girl gave him a mask of a hurt man, then her blonde-haired daughter gave him a Care Bear one. He wanted neither of those, Funshine wearing the latter mask. The gang continued to rock out to the music, Mike head-banging with them. The little girl gave him a baby mask, him rejecting it nicely. They all rocked out to the song again, Mike now smiling and moving his arms as a way of dancing to it.

Finally, Nancy gave him a black and white evil cartoon mask. He liked that one and decided to keep it on. He looked at Dottie and Funshine. The punk-haired girl nodded and pointed her fingers at him while Funshine just nodded. They all continued to rock out to the song, Nancy wearing a girly, make-overed mask.

---

Mick had made the van go to the gas station and stop at one of the gas tanks. Everyone removed their masks, most of them getting out of the car and going into the gas station itself. Mike looked confused and asked his sister, "What are we doing?"

"Stocking up," she answered him.

"Get me cookies, Mommy," Holly said to her.

She turned to her and smiled. "Don't worry, I will." She looked at her little brother and gestured him to come with her arm. He shrugged and got out of the van, closing the door of the van and getting into the store with her and the rest of the gang.

The store seemed to look old-fashioned, being made of mostly wood. There were plenty of food and other things in there though. Nancy got a shocked face and looked at the cashier, saying, "Hey!" He looked up at her with a confused face. She tilted her head to the left. "Your bathroom's leaking."

He looked at the bathroom, him seeing it actually leaking through the bottom crack of the door. He looked baffled at this and exclaimed, "Oh shit!" He then ran and carefully tried to get in there with the leaking sewage water...

Even though to everyone else, it looked like he was walking funny into it.

"Yeah...shit." That made Mike giggle a little.

Axel appeared in front of the bathroom door with a grin and announced, "Alright, contestants, ya got a minute and a half, so let's begin our supermarket sweep!" He spread his arms out to create a sweeping motion. That made everyone scatter and get whatever they wanted.

Mike had gotten to a place in the store where produce was being sold. He grabbed an apple and moved forward before stopping when he saw boxes of Eggos in the freezer. He wanted them more than anything else, so he instantly put the apple back and opened the freezer to grab a few boxes of Eggos. He walked down the freezer aisle to find some tubs of ice cream, if there was any.

Nancy had taken some sweets for Holly, though she knew too much sugar would be bad for her young daughter. That's why she also got some healthy bars for her as well.

When Axel was stealing money from the cash register and putting it in a paper bag he got, he stopped when he heard a man shout, "HEY!" He and the rest of the gang looked to see the cashier out of the bathroom, holding a gun and pointing it right at him. "You put that money back where it belongs or I'll blow your head off." Mike felt stiff when he saw him with a gun before seeing the guy with the mohawk slowly raise his hands up from the cash register. Apparently, that wasn't good enough for him, because then he shouted, "Did you

hear me, freak?!"

Nancy got herself into the scene, looking as calm as she could while holding her hands up a little. "Just put the gun down," she told him.

He then pointed at her and stepped away. "Stay back...STAY BACK!"

She still looked calm despite this, surprising the telekinetic boy. "Darrel, listen to me. Your money is insured. We're not stealing from you. We're stealing from the glorified criminals that are the billionaires running this place." While she was talking, the gang and Mike stepped closer, carefully. "Trust me, you won't even lose a dime." She smiled when she said that and shrugged.

He got closer to her with the gun, still looking unconvinced and making Mike feel tense. She lost her smile when he did that. "I said stay back."

She kept her hands up. "We're on the same side, I assure you."

He still pointed at the gun at her, now making the boy feel rather...mad. "Stay...back."

He was going to shoot her, Mike knew it. He didn't want that to happen, so he screamed and raised his hand up to use his power. He threw the man against a wall with styrofoam boxes, knocking him unconscious. Everyone, including the boy himself, got closer to make sure he was unconscious, looking quite shocked that he knocked him out like that.

"Daaaaamn, Carl," Axel said, sounding impressed.

Before anyone could say anything else, everyone heard police sirens off in the distance. Funshine was the first to react, whisper-shouting, "Go, go, go!" Everyone hurried out of the store, getting their things and throwing them into the van.

"We need to go, Mick!" Axel shouted to the driver.

"Okay!" she replied, getting in the van and starting it up. Without pulling out the pump, the gang had driven away quickly, leaving it to leak. Mike laid on the floor and sighed. That was the first-no,

actually, second robbery he's performed. However, this one was his most intense. He was glad it didn't get any worse. Plus, he threw that man and didn't have his nose bleed at all. That meant something good, did it?

---

It was nighttime now as they finally arrived at the apartment Ray lived in. Mick parked right across from it, her and Axel looking back at the rest of the gang as she held onto her tiger mask. "Alright, we'll have to case the place and stick to the routine," she said. "We have time."

"We also have Mike," Nancy added, tilting her head towards her little brother before looking at him. "Can you look to make sure?"

He only nodded as a reply before closing his eyes and shutting out all his senses. Everyone was silent, even Holly, before he opened his eyes back up and looked at his sister. "He's watching TV." His nose bled a little.

"Is he alone?" Mick asked.

He nodded at her. "I saw no one else."

The bleached-haired girl smiled and stated, "Works for me."

Bouncing in excitement, Dottie replied, "Me too."

"Let's do this," Funshine also replied before they all put their respective masks on.

"Keep it running," Nancy told Mick.

"Right, meet you around the back," she replied.

Before the two siblings could leave, Holly hugged her mom, making her hug back. She then hugged Mike, making him do the same to her, smiling under his mask. "Aw, sweetie. We'll be back."

"I know," she replied, breaking her hug with her uncle. "I'll still miss you." Holly was so cute to Mike and Nancy in that very moment...

The teen took off her mask to plant a kiss on her forehead before telling her, "Now, go onto Auntie Mick." She nodded as she climbed onto the African-American woman's lap, her buckling the two of them up. She gave Nancy the thumbs-up, making her and Mike leave the van with the rest of the gang and close the door. As they approached the building, the van drove off. Holly hoped that her mom and her uncle will be alright.

---

They went inside and followed Mike up to Ray's room. The door, unsurprisingly, was locked, so he tilted his head down and used his power to unlock the door. They heard one click, then a chain jingling. He then used it to test out if he could shut the TV off. He didn't heard the TV show the man was watching, so it worked. He turned to the rest of the gang, Nancy nodding as a way to tell him to open the door.

He did so, discreetly so that he wouldn't notice. Everyone walked inside quietly before getting into his living room. The man himself was turning the knobs, confused that the TV shut itself off. Nancy then greeted him with, "What's up, Ray?" He instantly looked at her and the masked gang. It was him, the man that shattered their mom's brain. There was no doubt in the siblings' minds.

"J-Jesus!" he exclaimed as he tried to escape. Suddenly, Funshine got in his way. Even though he had a Care Bear mask on, his demeanor was intimidating.

"Sit down..." he demanded him in a voice that matched his demeanor. "Please." He walked towards him, making him raise his hands up and step back in complete fear. "I said sit down!" He then grabbed him and threw him back onto his chair. Seeing Funshine like that made Mike tense, even though he wasn't Ray.

"P-please...just please..." He looked so scared about what was happening. "Take whatever you want, okay?"

Axel bent down to him and replied, "Oh, we will."

Dottie bent down to him as well. "Where's your wallet, old man?" she asked.

"Bedroom...my jeans, in my bedroom." That was enough for them to leave and steal whatever he had. Funshine kept himself in position in front of the door while the Wheeler siblings stepped right in front of the scared man. He looked at them, both of them feeling pure hatred for him. Nancy took off her mask, gesturing Mike to do the same. When he did that, Ray now looked a little puzzled.

"Do you remember us, Ray?" Nancy asked him. He only shook his head as a reply. The teen then used her power to make the lights go nuts in Ray's vision before seeing the two being replaced with the younger versions of themselves wearing their uniforms. "What about us? You must remember us, Ray." His eyes widened in horror, knowing now that these two were Dr. Wheeler's kids.

When the lights came back to normal, Nancy gave him a punch near the top of his head, making him fall down from his chair and scream. He looked up at the both of them, pleading. "Please...please..."

The two of them kept their cold and hateful looks towards him as Mike said, "You hurt our mom." He then screamed and threw him against the wall with his power. He grunted in pain, now having a bleeding scratch to the right of his head. The impact he made on the wall created a dent.

The two siblings began to approach him, making him more terrified than he was before. "W-wait, wait!" He was shaking, in both his body and his voice. "Pl-please, listen..." He sat up, almost about to cry. "I...I just did what he told me to do." The two stopped, Mike looking concerned now. "Y-your dad and Dr. Brenner, they told me she was sick!"

Mike still looked concerned, but Nancy looked unconvinced, making him look the same. "You had a choice, Ray Carrol, and what did you choose? To follow two men that you knew were evil."

Just as the freckled boy was going to use his power on him again, Ray exclaimed, "WAIT! Wait!" He stopped using it when he exclaimed that. "I...I can help."

Nancy scoffed. "Help?"

"I-in finding him."

"Who?"

"Your dad, Dr. Wheeler!" Hearing that name was enough to make them both tense up, Mike especially. "Br-Brenner's gone, but Wheeler...I can take you both to him."

The boy's eyes were watering up, feeling so many unpleasant feelings hearing about this, about his horrible father. "Dad...is gone."

Ray shook his head. "No, Brenner is gone...but your dad's alive."

Nancy gave him a sharp glare. "Don't you lie to us, Ray."

"I'm not!" He began to cry and sob, whimpering, "I swear..." He sniffled. "Your dad trusts me. I can take you to him."

Neither of them knew how to react to that in that moment. It was fine that Brenner was dead, but not their own dad? That psychopath that treated his own children as nothing more than lab rats? Objects of an experiment? While Nancy didn't know him for too long, she knew that he was horrible...and clever. Mike, on the other hand, refused to believe that the man who was his father, who never cared for anyone but himself and maybe his friend Brenner...was still alive.

"Well, if that psychopath of our father is still alive, Mike can find him, just like he found you," the teenager told him in a cold voice. He continued to cry as she looked at her brother and said, "Do it, Mike."

The boy thought the man was really lying. Plus...he set that machine to four-fifty and tortured his mom's brain with it. He was begging for him not to kill him, but he raised his hand up to an upwards claw, choking him. He was gagging, falling to the side and putting his hands on his neck to make it stop. He was using a lot of his power to choke him, having a face of coldness and anger as he stepped towards. With every step, the choking man moved a little.

"Not too quick," the teen said to him. "He didn't give our mom that kind of mercy." He did that, loosening his power's grip on the man's throat a little, but still using it a lot. His face was now completely red, him slowly becoming limp but still moving. He thought to



himself that this man, this horrible bad man, deserved this. He deserved to die painfully and slowly.

As he used more of his power to choke him, he suddenly noticed a broken photo next to the man's face. It was of him and two other girls, one a teenager and the other a child...perhaps they were his daughters. They were all happy and smiling, him having his arms around their shoulders. Several emotions began to wash over him, now his face becoming softer and...guilty. Seeing that picture made him feel so...

He finally removed his power's grip on the man's throat, him gasping for air and coughing. This surprised his older sister, her eyes wide. "Hey, what's wrong?" she asked him. He didn't answer, gulping and feeling awful right now. This man had two daughters...like- "What's wrong, Mike?"

Axel and Dottie came out of one room, the guy with the mohawk saying, "Uh, we gotta problem, Nance."

They both looked up at them as the punk-haired girl pointed at the bedroom they came out of. "There's kids...in the apartment," she added.

Nancy swore under her breath while Mike felt even more terrible. However, his sister looked at him while Ray was begging again and stated, "Did this son of a bitch give our mom any mercy? No."

"No...please, don't..." he begged the boy specifically. "I'm sorry..."

The boy's eyes were brimming with tears as Nancy continued, "He took her away from us: no hesitation, no second thought, not a doubt on his mind." He still hated this man, but...to kill him when he has a family...especially since the mom was probably absent-

"We NEED to go, Nance! They called the damn cops!"

"In a minute!" she shouted to Axel before looking at her little brother one more time. "Now, Mike! FINISH IT!" His own sister wanted him to kill him, but...

Ray shook his head. "No...please, please, don't! Please...please..." This

man had been horrible...but Mike won't kill him because he had a family...a family similar to the Ives'. Maybe his apology was genuine...maybe-

Nancy groaned and said, "Fine, then I'll do the honors." She then pulled out her gun, unlocked the safety, and pointed it at Ray, shocking Mike. He screamed before the boy used his power to throw it out the window. She gasped and looked at him with her jaw dropped and her eyes...watery. He looked at her with a stern face and shook his head. This flickered her anger, the anger she thought she moved on from long ago. "You little-"

Police sirens were heard from the distance, making Axel and Dottie walk. "Nancy, we gotta GO!" Since there was no more time left, they all left the apartment...leaving Ray Carrol alive.

---

Everyone got outside, going down the flight of stairs as everyone except Mike muttered curses. They all ran to the van, Axel whisper-shouting, "Go, go, go!" He almost tripped before Dottie first arrived at the van and opened the door in a hurry. "Come on, get in!" she shouted as everyone got right into the van. When the door closed, the van instantly sped along out of there.

Mike and Nancy sat together, the boy having a couple tears go down his cheeks before he wiped them away. As Axel handed Holly to Funshine, Nancy looked at him rather angrily and told him, "If you wanted to show mercy to the man that destroyed our mom, then fine." He looked at her, still feeling awful. "But don't you EVER take away MY choice of what I want to do to him again, understand?" He now felt both awful and, as she said earlier in the day, pissed off at her. She didn't know. She had no idea that killing him would be a bad idea, despite him being a bad man.

"Mommy...?" the blonde-haired girl asked her mom, her and her uncle looking at her. She looked sad, making them both feel terrible. "Is something wrong?"

Nancy sighed deeply and brought her onto her lap. "No, it's just...things didn't go right tonight." She gave Mike a sharp glare, making him do the same as he looked out the window.

"It didn't...?" She looked like she was about to cry.

The teenage girl stroked her hair and bounced her a little, giving her a face of reassurance. "Don't worry. Things will go right next time." She hoped to God it will, especially since her little brother, surprisingly, screwed it up. Seriously...it was just like her experiencing her past...

---

**Stopping right here. How was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**Mike's new look was kind of inspired by one photo-op Finn did (remove the spaces): 78. media. tumblr. (add com slash here) b670fecf6b1bdd193b69efccd37e6e52 / tumblr\_ovm4e6j6xr1tmwudwo4\_500. jpg. Hope you guys like it!**

**Soooooooo...Brenner's confirmed to be dead, but Ted? Not really...one horrible human being is dead, but the another, according to Ray...**

**Now begins the strain of the Wheeler siblings' relationship...one wants to spare the man that destroyed their mother, the other wants to kill him then and there. I figured that in this life, Nancy would never flinch at the opportunity to kill someone, especially someone from the Lab, like Kali in canon. Mike wouldn't unless there are certain circumstances (i.e.: him and the Party getting chased back in Season 1). This isn't one of them because...well, his family nearly resembled the Ives', so...yeah. Of course, difference in view is going to sour their relationship.**

**Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

## 46. I Have To Go Back

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

Now back in their hideout, the gang hung out upstairs on the second floor and did their usual thing. Nancy was in her room with Holly, putting her small night gown on her. "Mommy?" she asked her.

"Yes, Holly?" she replied.

"Is Uncle Mike okay? He looks sad."

She sighed, knowing what she was going to say to her was bullshit. "Yeah, yeah, he's fine."

"Are you sure?"

She nodded. "Absolutely. It's just...it's been a long day." She nodded before putting her on a bed, next to the toys she's stolen for her. "I'll go check on him. You stay here until I come back, okay?"

"Yes, Mommy." She smiled at her before leaving the room and having her play with her toys. She was going to him to talk to him about tonight. It wasn't to make him feel bad, just...what he should do next time.

...

Meanwhile, the boy himself was in his bedroom above the ground floor, sitting on a chair across from his "bed" and somberly looking at his old clothes in his arms. What happened earlier was still going through his head. Nancy being mad at him like that earlier just felt like a stab to the chest. She had to understand that maybe, despite what he's done to their mom in the past, he didn't deserve to get killed. She had to-

A sudden knock on the doorway broke him out of his thoughts. He looked to see the girl herself standing there, looking just as somber as he was. "You mind if I sit?" she asked him.

He just shrugged and answered in a monotone voice, "Sure."

She sighed and sat on the edge of the mattress, lacing her fingers together and looking at him. "Listen, Mike." Though he didn't want to, he looked right at her to listen. "I was just like you once. That's why I'm being hard on you, because I see my past mistakes in you."

He took a deep breath, looking a little upset now. "He had two kids...a family."

She scoffed and shook her head. "So what? That excuses what he's done? We were kids too and he was part of the reason why we couldn't be PART of a family." This just made him feel more upset. Her eyes began to water as she pursed her lips. "Mike...I remember going into the rainbow room one day and...you weren't there. Day after day, you still weren't there." He had his somber face again as her voice slowly sounded more sad. "I kept asking, 'Where's Michael? Where's my little brother?' And I get no answer to that. I was alone...again." Now he looked like he was going to cry. "So, when my gift was strong, I used it to escape. But before I got out of the building, I...I looked all over for you. I wanted to take you with me." She sniffled and shook her head, her voice now sobby. "But I couldn't, so I just left without you."

She could feel a tear running down her cheek, so she wiped it and continued, "I promised myself that when I am completely ready, I'll go back there and rescue you." He gulped, sniffing as well. "But at the time, I wasn't, so I just ran. I ran as fast and as far away as I could. And finally, I found a place to hide, far away from that hellhole. It was a home in the far suburbs. The family there treated me well, just like Terry and the police chief probably treated you before things went south. I even fell in love with their son...Holly's dad." She paused to take a deep breath. "But after so long, they couldn't help me. So eventually, I ran away from them too...even Holly's dad." To Mike, that was so sad...to leave even his niece's dad behind...

"I struggled because I eventually found out that I was pregnant. I didn't know what to do because I would have to give birth to her, but I didn't know how. Then I found Mick one day and...we decided to stay together, eventually meeting Funshine and Axel too. When it

was time, Holly was born, thanks to their help. She became very important to me and still is. I couldn't bear the thought of being found by...them and taking her away too, so...I decided to play the part, to stop hiding like a coward. I would use my gift against those sons of bitches that hurt us...and use them to get you back." Mike pursed his lips as well, feeling forlorn now. "Now you're facing the same choice, Michael. You can go hide and hope they don't find you. But you can fight and face them again."

Them... "Face who?"

"Those bastards from the Lab and the son of a bitch that's our dad."

He shook his head, still in denial that he was still alive. "Dad is dead...like the Doctor."

"Well, that man tonight disagreed," replied a voice Mike never thought he'd hear again. He turned himself around to see his dad, Nancy's dad, right before them, his hands behind his back. He could feel his blood run cold and his skin rise at seeing him again. He wasn't real...he was dead...how could Nancy even do this?

He stood up from his chair, his eyes almost about to release tears as he stepped towards him to see if it really was him she made him see. He stopped a good distance from him and muttered, "You're not real."

Fake Ted chuckled at that. "Oh really? All this time and you haven't looked for me?" He stepped closer to the boy, making him step back. "Why is that, son? Is it because you thought I was dead like the Doctor?" He stopped and tilted his head down. "Or were you just afraid of what you might find?"

He shook his head, not wanting to answer his question. "Go away."

"Like I did?" asked another voice he never thought he'd hear again. He instantly turned his head to his left and saw Dr. Brenner...as a living dead body. His skin was an unhealthy pale, a few bloody scars was on his face, his eyes had no life in them, and his clothes looked withered. The boy didn't scream, but he was terrified by what he saw. He chuckled and walked towards him too. "Well, Michael Eleven, that won't be possible."

The freckled boy sat back down on his chair, still shaking his head at the two as he looked about ready to cry. "Get away from me..."

"The only way that can happen is to confront your pain," Fake Brenner continued.

"Correct," Fake Ted added. "You have a terrible wound, Michael, a terrible, festering wound." The boy clenched on his old clothes tight before the two fake men got close to him.

"Do you know what that means?"

"When a wound festers?" He didn't answer the two of them, feeling upset, scared, and mad at the same time.

The two men crouched down to him and answered in-sync, "It means a rot...a rot that will grow and spread."

A tear escaped his eye as he closed them and told Nancy, "Stop it."

"This rot that will grow and spread...will eventually kill you."

He had enough, feeling how he felt when he argued with Terry and Hopper, so he yelled, "GET OUT OF MY HEAD!" The lights flickered in a violent and fast pattern before it went back to normal. Both Fake Ted and Fake Dead Brenner were gone, the boy crying and sniffing.

Nancy looked solemn as she moved herself in front of him, crouching down. "That was just as unpleasant for me as it is for you, Mike," she told him. He looked at her with sharp eyes. Though it hurt her to see him look at her like that, she kept her cool. "I showed you them to prove a point. You need to let it all go if you ever want to feel freed from them." He sniffled, not replying to her at the moment. She sighed and continued, "You're my little brother, Mike. I don't hate you. I told you before, I'm only doing this because the mistakes you made were the mistakes I made before. I'm trying to make you a better person." Was she? It didn't feel like it. "Let us continue to try and avenge our mom and heal our wounds together." She then hugged him, in which he didn't give back, before leaving the room and went up the stairs.

He wiped the tears from his eyes and clenched his teeth hard, feeling

absolutely mad that Nancy had the guts to even show him those two men. How could she? Trying to make him a better person by pissing him off with that stunt...to him, that wasn't making him into a better person. That was being an asshole. Here, he thought he would call this place home...

But even though his actual sister and little niece was here, this wasn't his home.

...

As she arrived upstairs, she saw Holly out of her room, looking worried. She should have known that she would notice the lights flickering the way they did. She walked towards her and held her up. "Mommy, why were the lights like that?" she asked her.

"Oh, must be an electrical problem," she answered, lying.

"We haven't had that problem since the storm back in September," Axel stated before Funshine laid his deck of cards on the table.

"Haha! Full house!" he told him.

Out of anger, he swept the money away and got away from the table. "Screw this shit, I'm out."

Funshine continued laughing while Dottie got the money and replied, "Outta money, you mean. 'Cause you are BROKE!"

Nancy giggled at that, almost forgetting that she was getting upset about the situation with Mike. However, Holly asked, "How is Uncle Mike?"

She looked at her with wide eyes. "Oh, Uncle Mike, he's...alright." She then walked to their room as Dottie offered Mick to gamble with her and Funshine. "Come on, let's get you to bed."

...

Mike had got his bag and stuffed whatever he had inside of it, if it could fit. He grabbed his shirt and took a look at it for a bit. Just seeing this thing made him feel...nostalgic. It was like all his worries



were washed away by his nostalgia. Wanting to feel it more, he closed his eyes and held the shirt to his chest. One memory came to him...

---

*"Your real name's Michael?" Jane asked him. He nodded at her, making her nod back. "Alright, then...my name is Jane. Jane Ives." She pointed at herself before dropping her hand to her lap.*

---

*"Maybe we can call you Mike. Mike is short for Michael, after all."*

---

He missed her...he missed her so much...if only he could see her again...

Another memory then came up, that one being when he saved Jane from falling to her death and Dustin as well from those mouth-breathers.

---

*Dustin smiled and shouted at the running boy, "Yeah! You better run! You know why?!" He pointed at the freckled boy while Jane stood up, keeping her smile as she saw the two run away. "He's our friend and he's crazy!"*

---

And then later, after he woke up from passing out...Jane told him...

---

*"No, Mike. You're not the monster. You saved me. Please understand that, Mike. You saved me."*

---

Oh, Jane...

And she wasn't the only one he missed...

---

*"Com-promise?" he asked Hopper, separating "com" from "promise" as he spoke.*

*"It means something kind of in-between," he answered him kindly. "Halfway happy."*

*The man had ruffled his hair, making him grin and chuckle a little.*

---

It wasn't his fault that he failed to compromise, right? And also...

---

*"Mike!" Terry exclaimed when he stole the bag of candy from her. He wiped away the small amount of blood with his nose and chuckled a little. She gave him a stern look, though the stern look included a smile, and crossed her arms. "You're not eating that candy until Hopper comes back, okay?"*

---

She was just being fair at the moment. Plus, she was able to watch scary movies with him all night before Hopper finally came back. He had a good time with her. In fact...

---

*When he saw them for the first time in a while during winter, they both looked surprised. Terry sighed blissfully and walked towards him. "Michael." She then hugged him and he hugged back tightly. He then looked at Hopper, who greeted him with a friendly face and a simple, "Hey, kid."*

---

*When they were in the cabin, Terry asked him after talking about her grandparents' cabin, "What do you think, Michael?"*

*"Once we do fix this up, buddy, it'll look more nice than it is now," Hopper added.*

*"Exactly."*

*"This will be your new home." The two of them smiled warmly at him.*

---

Home...that was it. His mom's home, Nancy's home...those places weren't his home.

His true home was Hawkins, Indiana.

---

*Mike opened his eyes and found himself in the darkness. He was surprised he was here, though it made sense since he just focused on those memories and nothing else.*

*He suddenly saw...Terry and Hopper not too far from him. He walked closer, seeing that they were wearing scrubs the Lab provided them and in front of a machine that showed something. They looked nervous, doing some nervous gestures. They then looked at it, their faces now of shock, and leaned towards it. "Oh my God, that's the place."*

*"That's where Terry and I were at," Hopper added. "That damn graveyard..." This worried Mike a lot, making him think back to their apology to him he heard this morning. What Hopper called a "damn graveyard"...was that what he was talking about? That was the "something that came up" that had the both of them involved?*

*Before he could think further, he suddenly heard Jane's voice yell, "Let me through!" He turned and saw the curly-haired tomboy running before being held back by...someone, he assumed. She looked horrified, making his worry skyrocket. "PLEASE, I have to warn them! It's a trap! It's a TRAP!"*

*His jaw dropped, now wanting to reach out to her. "Jane!" he shouted out, running to her.*

*Her eyes were brimming with tears as she continued to shout, "IT'S A TRAP! IT'S A TRAP!" When he tried to touch her, she just disappeared into thin air, just like that. This made him feel more worried and sad than before.*

*"Jane!" he shouted, looking around for her. "JANE! JANE!" He didn't give up because he knew that, along with Terry and Hopper, that she was in danger. "JANE, WHERE ARE YOU?! JANE! JANE!"*

*Before he could shout her name more, he suddenly heard a loud bang. The loud bang became louder, making him look back with wide eyes. What was that sound...?*

---

*"Uh, Nance?" Axel said, getting into her and Holly's bedroom.*

The two girls looked up at him, the teen asking, "What is it, Ax?"

"We heard some loud banging downstairs and I don't think it's your brother doin' it."

Her eyes widened in complete shock, that only meaning one thing...the police. "Oh, goddamn it." She stood up from the bed, Holly looking scared.

"What's going on, Mommy?" she asked in a voice that matched her expression.

She turned and pointed at her. "Holly, sweetie, stay with the rest of the gang. I'll be right back to get your uncle!" She then ran before her daughter could say anything else.

...

On the ground floor, one of the doors to the building was kicked open, making Mike break right out of his vision. He stuffed his shirt into his bag, swung it over his shoulder, and looked out his window to see the police swarming the floor. Now he felt terrified since they reminded him of...the Lab's soldiers.

He felt a hand on his shoulder, making him gasp and turn to see Nancy placing a finger on her lips to keep him quiet. She mouthed to him, "Let's go." He nodded as they both ran out of the room and up the stairs.

"FREEZE!" shouted one of the officers, all of them facing them. "DON'T MOVE!" They still did, as much as Mike wanted to freeze at that very moment.

They reached up to the second floor, seeing the gang and Holly looking terrified. "The hell's going on?" Axel asked.

"They found us!" Nancy answered.

"The...the bad guys?" Holly asked, looking more scared as she held onto Mike's leg. He held her close.

"Oh, for the love of Jesus-" Axel pulled out his pistol, but Nancy

lowered it down.

"Nononono..." she whispered, spreading her arms and shushing everyone. She mouthed to them, "Stay still and be quiet." Everyone did so as the police came up the stairs and looked around. It seemed like no one was there because they didn't pay any attention to them, thanks to Nancy's power. Holly looked like she was about to cry, but her mom mouthed out to her, "Sweetie, stay quiet and they won't hear you." She nodded and kept close to her uncle.

One officer, the one that noticed them earlier, was passing by Mike and Holly, the two quietly moving away so that their cover wouldn't be blown. Everyone felt very tense and scared, staying as quiet and still as they could. After a bit, the police disappearing, making the teen tilt her head as gesture for them to escape. They all wasted no time to follow her down the stairs quickly and outside to go to their van.

Once they got outside, Funshine shouted, "Come on, go, go!"

But then, they got noticed by some officers out there, making one of them shout, "HEY!"

Axel began shooting at them with his pistol, making Holly scream before Mick scooped her up. "Come on, let's go!" she shouted at Mike and Axel. Axel shot at the cops a couple more time before he, Mike, Holly, and Mick got to the side of the truck, hiding from the multiple bullets being shot at them. The little girl was screaming and crying, Mick cradling her so she wouldn't get hit by the glass. Funshine was covering Dottie and Mike for the same reason. Axel got a couple more shots at the cops, but none of the bullets hit any of them. He released he was out of ammo and hid behind the van again as they continued to shoot.

Mike, Mick, Axel, Dottie, and Holly screamed as more shots came to the van. Nancy felt heartbroken to see her own daughter cry and scream like this since this must be traumatizing for her. "D-don't worry, sweetie! Mommy's going to fix this!" she shouted before closing her eyes and raising a clenched fist to her face.

"Any day now, NANCE!" Axel yelled. Her nose bled and she opened

her eyes. The men have stopped shooting, which was good enough for everyone. They all went inside to their respective spots...except Michael. Nancy and Holly looked at him, the bleached-haired girl gesturing him to get on. "Get in, Mike!" she demanded him. But he couldn't...after seeing that those he cared about most back in Hawkins were in danger... "Mike!"

He sighed deeply and shook his head at her. "I'm sorry, Nancy, but I can't," he replied to her. "I have to go back." She looked absolutely appalled by that statement while her daughter looked confused. "My friends...all of my friends are in danger."

"What?" He was going to be out of her life...? Again...? But-

The guy with the mohawk chimed in by saying, "Hey, this ain't the time for a talk! We gotta go NOW!"

None of the three acknowledged what he just said, Nancy's eyes watering again as she shook her head. "Y-you can't leave...Mom sent you here for a reason! We're brother and sister! We belong together!" Now Holly began to look sad as well, continuing to cry. "What the hell are you going to find back there, Mike?! None of them can save you!"

He felt so frustrated and awful, especially since he also has to leave his niece behind too...but it was for the best. He shook his head with tear-filled eyes, muttering, "No..." He gulped. "But I can save them." He remembered that after Jane told him he wasn't a monster, they hugged with Dustin, staying that way for a long time. That was the best reward he could get...comfort.

"N-no, Uncle Mike..." Holly whimpered, her lip quivering. "Don't go..."

He cried seeing her like this, but still... "I'm sorry, Holly." He looked at his sister, who was now crying, and said, "I'm sorry, Nancy." He then ran away from them, the little girl bursting into tears and sobs once more.

"Mike! MIKE!" Nancy yelled at him. "GET THE HELL BACK OVER HERE!" He just kept running though, crying. "MIKE! MIKE!"

Suddenly, the cops started shooting again, seeing that the wall Nancy made them see disappeared. Wasting no time, Mick made a quick three-way turn, Funshine shutting the van door, and sped away into the tunnel. Mike just kept running, feeling awful for leaving them like that. There was no turning back now...he has to go back to his home, Hawkins.

---

Inside of the van, Holly was crying and sobbing onto her mother's chest. She was crying as well, her cheeks stained with tears. She couldn't believe it...her little brother, her long, lost little brother...was out of her life once again. She got reunited with him yesterday and he left now because he felt guilty for leaving his friends behind?!

"What the hell was wrong with him?!" Axel exclaimed. "What was that?!"

"Why would he leave you two like that?!" Mick also exclaimed, being just as baffled as everyone else was.

Nancy only sniffled and wiped the blood off her nose with her glove. She held Holly close and petted her hair, looking out the window with teary eyes. Why would he leave his sister and niece like that...? Was he being a selfish brat...? Or did he care more about his friends...than his own blood?

Goddamn it, she didn't know...he was just...gone...again.

---

Mike had gotten into another bus to Hawkins and looked out the window. His eyes were a little pink from crying a lot earlier. It was truly difficult and frustrating for him to leave his own sister and his own niece like that. If he could stay with them and also save his friends, he would do it. But it was one or the other. As much as it hurt to leave them and the gang behind...

He would never forgive himself if he let Jane, Terry, Hopper, and the others die from the danger they were dealing with. He knew them longer than his own family...and he saved them once. It would eat away at him if he didn't save them again.

"Aw, are you alright, sweetheart?" asked an unfamiliar woman's voice. He looked away from the window to see an elderly African-American woman on the couple of seats next to his. She looked friendly and was touching his arm. "You looked a little sad there. Do you mind if I sit with you?" Not feeling like talking at the second, he just shrugged. She then moved herself onto the seat next to him, getting a closer look of him.

"Oh, you're quite young to be traveling alone, young man." He sighed and looked away from her. She smiled and looked down at her purse. "Well, quite the chatterbox, aren't you?" He could almost hear that in Hopper's voice, since that was something he would say. There was a word for it, but he couldn't remember. She looked at him again. "So, where are you headed to? Your parents?"

In a way.

He looked at her, feeling a bit calm now, and answered, "I'm going back to my friends." She nodded as he looked away from her and smiled when he saw that the bus was about to cross the Indiana-Illinois border. "I'm going back home." If he has the time...he could find and go back to Nancy and Holly. But for now, he has friends to save and a danger to eliminate.

---

**And that's it for the completely Mike-centric chapters! What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**I hope I wrote this whole thing well. I'm sure it's much harder for Mike to not only leave Nancy behind, but also Holly, more than Eleven leaving Kali behind. After all, he was leaving his own sibling and niece to go back home to his friends and who he considers his family. Just leaving them in danger would make him feel horrible.**

**Of course, his leave makes them both completely heartbroken...poor them, honestly...**

**Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**



## 47. Open Sesame

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

As the tech room fell silent, Terry and Jim looked through the glass separating the room from the outside to see if the things the red dots represented were going to appear. Low growling could vaguely be heard, heightening the fear that was building up in not just them, but everyone else. They had to be ready to get the hell out, just in case.

As Dr. Owens joined them, they all suddenly saw a hand pop out of the hole and grab the edge of it. As it was getting up, it turned out to be a creature with the head of a Demogorgon. It seemed to notice everyone in the tech room, Terry and Jim especially, so it roamed closer to them. Both had backed away from the window a little, the dirty-blond-haired woman holding the police chief's arm.

"Mother of God..." the old doctor muttered. It then placed its hands on the window, looking like a dog on its two hind legs. The two adults got a closer look, seeing its breath fog up the glass a little. And then, it suddenly screeched, making them all shoot back in shock and Terry gasp, and began charging itself to the glass to break it. After a few attempts, it stopped.

To alleviate their fear as well as his own, Dr. Owens told the two, "It's polycarbonate, so it can't get through." It only alleviated their fear partially as the creature roared. Its roar led to several more like it to crawl out of the hole like bugs. Everyone's fear heightened again, the lead scientist muttering, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph..."

The adults that were close to the windows backed away the instant they saw more of those creatures coming, the first one roaring and staining the glass with its saliva. Soon, they all began charging at the glass at once, roaring and actually cracking it. Dr. Owens wasn't the only one surprised to see it cracking, as the scientists and Terry were surprised as well.

"It takes a lot of strength to break that thing..." the woman muttered in horror.

Scared, the old doctor got next to one of the machines in the room and pressed a bright red button to turn on the alarm.

---

In the emergency room Will, Joyce, Bob, and Jane were in, they heard the alarm going off. Bob looked both confused and worried, saying, "What the hell...?"

This only made Jane more distressed as she put her hands on her temples. "No, no, no...we're under attack."

Joyce and Bob gave her shocked looks, the woman asking, "What?"

---

Everyone in the tech room ran out of it, Jim holding the door before closing it. He, Terry, and Dr. Owens were in the middle of the hallway as the scientists departed from them. The doctor looked behind him and pointed at a door. "This way!" he told the two other adults. They followed him into the staircase and ran up them to get to the rest and get the hell out before it's late.

---

Jane realized that this attack meant that the shadow monster could know where they are, especially since he was taking over Will. She managed to get out of Bob's hug and run to a tray, picking up a needle and facing everyone else. "We need to make Will go to sleep," she said.

"What?!" Joyce repeated, now exclaiming it. "Why?!"

"He's a spy!" Saying that made the boy's eyes widen. "If he knows where we are, then the shadow monster will find us!"

As if she wasn't telling the truth, Will yelled, "She's lying!"

Though it broke her heart to hear him yell that, if he even meant it, she continued, "He killed those soldiers, so he'll kill us too!" She hoped that her mom will be alright, but still...

"SHE'S LYING!" he yelled, rising out of the bed with Joyce and Bob holding him back. "SHE'S LYING! SHE'S LYING!" He kept yelling that, making them all extremely scared and worried for him.

Suddenly, they all heard gunshots not too far from the hallway, Bob exclaiming, "Are those gunshots?!" That spoke the worst to everyone, especially Jane, her eyes getting watery again.

"SHE'S LYING! SHE'S LYING!" Will continued to yell out. "SHE'S LYING!"

To make sure Jane wasn't making an out-of-left-field suggestion, Joyce grabbed his shoulders tightly and shouted, "Will, WILL, listen to me!" He stopped and looked at her with his widened eyes. "D-do you know who I am?" He didn't answer that straight away, so she shook him a little. "Do you know WHO I am?"

He was shaking a little, his eyes darting around her a little. "Y-you're...you're-you're Mom!" he answered. He could still remember her, but the way he answered that...

She drew her lips to a thin line and looked at Bob, saying, "Bob, hold him down." She then walked to Jane, much to the boy's dismay.

"No, NO!" he shouted before the man did what his girlfriend told him to. "LET ME GO! LET ME GO!" The brunette grabbed the needle from Jane and a bottle of liquid to knock him out with. While he kept screaming to let him go, she sucked the liquid into the needle and put the bottle back, walking to him and putting his arm down to expose it. "NO, LET ME GO!" Jane covered her ears, looking more distressed at this happening.

"I'm so sorry, baby," Joyce said in a sad voice. "I'm sorry!" She finally stuck the needle into him and injected the liquid.

"LET ME GO! LET ME GOOO...let me go...lemme go..." His yelling became faltered before he finally got knocked out. Everyone took a deep breath, being safe for now-

The door suddenly shot open, making the three look at Hopper, Terry, and Dr. Owens panting. The tomboy was beyond relieved that her mother was fine, making her tackle-hug her and cry out, "MAMA!" Terry returned it, kissing the top of her head. "I'm so glad you're okay..." Meanwhile, she was glad that she was able to reach her daughter in time.

Hopper noticed the needle in Joyce's hand, but before he could think about why the hell she has that and why Will was asleep, everyone heard monsters roaring in the hallway. The mother and daughter released their hug before looking at the wooden doors breaking with everyone else. "We gotta go, now," he demanded everyone before going to Will and unhooking anything that was attached to him. Joyce grabbed the bottle of the knock-out liquid before all of them ran out.

...

As they were running through one hallway, they heard a woman screaming, then one of the creatures pouncing on one soldier and eating him. He screamed as the entire group stopped. They heard more gunshots, turning to see another soldier shoot a creature. They had nowhere else to go but in an open room near them.

"Come on!" Terry said, leading everyone inside. Hopper laid Will on a table as she shut the door and locked it.

Bob looked at the computers in horror and muttered, "Oh my God..." Everyone looked the same when they saw the computers showing the Demogorgon-like creatures all over, eating the corpses of the workers and roaming around the hallways. Suddenly, the lights flickered rapidly before everything just shut off, the room becoming completely dark.

"Oh my God..." Joyce muttered, covering her mouth in shock. Terry held Jane close as everyone looked fearful about this. A whole lot of small Demogorgons invaded this entire facility and the power was completely wiped out. This only meant one thing to all of them:

They were trapped...but they needed to get out of it.

...

With a flashlight found, Hopper shined it on the printed layouts of the Lab Dr. Owens had. He used a red marker to mark the places he was talking about. "See, this is us and this is the nearest exit." He pointed at the spot he circled. "But even if we can somehow make it there, there's no way out."

"Whaddaya mean?" Hopper asked.

He looked up at him. "We use fail-secure locks."

Joyce looked puzzled. "Fail-secure?"

"It means that if there's a power outage, the building goes on lockdown," Terry stated.

"Can it be unlocked remotely?" Bob asked.

While Terry shrugged, the doctor answered, "Yes, but with a computer. But even so, someone has to reset the breakers."

"And where are the breakers?" Hopper asked him.

"In the basement..." He got the layout of the basement. "...about three floors down." That's when he snatched it and was about to leave.

"Hey, wait!" Bob whisper-shouted, making him stop as he approached him. "Where are you going?"

He turned to him and answered. "I'm gonna reset the breakers."

He scoffed. "Okay, you reset the breakers, and then what?"

"We get outta here."

He shook his head. "No, the power gets back on. If you wanna unlock the doors, you'll have to reboot the computer system and then override the security codes with a manual input."

Hopper was silent for a second, processing the tech stuff spewed out to him. "Okay...then how do I do that?"

"You CAN'T if you don't know BASIC."

He looked puzzled, realizing it wasn't the word, but an acronym. "BASIC? What the hell is that?"

Jane sighed and answered, "It's a computer programming language."

He looked at Bob again. "Then teach it to me."

Bob scoffed again. "Should I teach you French while I'm at it, Jim?" That was definite no then. He then looked at the doctor and asked, "Do you know BASIC, doc?" He only shook his head, the man then looking at Jane. "Jane? You know a little?" She shook her head as well. He lastly looked at her mom. "Terry?"

"I'm not a technician," she answered. He sighed, realizing what this meant.

"Alright, I got this." He looked at Hopper, nodding. "Believe me, I know what to do."

Joyce looked worried and sad though, making her walk to him with a frown. "No, Bob, no..."

He gave her a reassuring look and gave her a hug. "Hey, it's okay. It's gonna be okay." He released the hug and continued with a smile, "Remember, Bob Newby, superhero." Feeling a bit reassured, she nodded and smiled back at him. Terry, along with her, had hoped that he'll be alright because he was a good man. Jane hoped that too.

---

Outside of the lab, Jonathan and Kali arrived at the gate, stopping near the booth. Both looked surprised as they got out and saw that the entire building was dark: no lights, no people...nothing but the occasional blinking from some windows. "Why're the lights off...?" Jonathan asked.

"Is it closed?" Kali also asked, just as puzzled as he was.

"There's no way the security called it a night." The Indian girl agreed to that as they both closed the doors and got into the booth. Jonathan pushed the open button, but didn't see the gate open at all. He pressed it multiple times, him and Kali looking completely baffled.

"Why the hell isn't it working?"

The auburn-haired guy then opened the power box and flicked some switches to make it open. Nothing was opening. "The power must be off..."

She sighed before spotting something from the distance, making

touch her friend's shoulder. "Jonathan...?"

"What?" he asked before looking where she was looking. They both could have sworn they saw light in the woods.

"Something's in the woods." With that, they both exited out of the booth, getting closer to the lights that became more apparent. They stopped, Kali yelling, "Hello?!" Whoever was controlling the lights didn't answer, though the lights stopped moving for a second. "Who's there?!" Whoever had the lights still wasn't moving.

"Come out!" Jonathan also yelled. That prompted one of the people in the woods to get out quickly before everyone else there did.

They were shocked to see the first person that stepped out, making them both exclaim, "Steve?!"

The jock's eyes widened at the sight of his girlfriend, seeing her after some time. "K-Kali...?" he said in a voice of both relief and confusion.

"Jonathan?" Dustin asked, the teens seeing him, Lucas, and some girl they've never seen before with the jock.

The two friends walked towards the group, the group doing the same towards them. "What are doing here with these kids?" Kali asked him.

Steve had no idea if he should hug her or not, considering her confusion. "What are you doing with him?" he asked her.

They stopped when they were close to each other. "We're looking our families. Mine wasn't at home."

"Mine neither," Jonathan added.

Dustin, looking worried that Jane still wasn't back home, tilted his head to the Lab. "They're not in there, are they...?"

The two teens shrugged. "Not sure..."

"Why aren't they-" His question was halted the second they all head a loud roar echo throughout the Lab. They all looked there with worried and scared faces. What was that...? If the Ives and the Byers

were in there...

---

Bob was prepped to defend himself, communicate with everyone else, and see where he's going, thanks to Jim looting what he needed from a dead agent. Him, armed with an assault rifle, and everyone else remained in the room, anxiously waiting for Bob to either say something or get the power back on. After a bit though, they saw the light flicker on, looking up at it with hope. The computers that showed every room got on as well. They got close and looked at the screen where Bob was flipping on the power switches.

"He made it..." Jane said with a slight smile on her face.

---

Outside, everyone was talking over each other about where the Ives, the Byers, and everyone else in the group went. However, Kali spotted the lights of the windows coming back on. She broke out of the conversation for a closer look to make sure she was seeing that right. "Power's back on," she told everyone. They went silent and saw that the lights were back on too.

Everyone ran back to the gate, Jonathan getting into the booth and pressing the open button again. The gate still wouldn't open, much to everyone's dismay. Dustin tried to press the button too, but it was no use, him cursing. Why wouldn't the damn thing open...?

---

Dr. Owens had plugged in a microphone and turned it on, sitting at the table it was at and speaking into it, "Alright, Bob, can you hear us?"

Without another second to pass by, he answered, "*Loud and clear, doc. Can you hear me back?*"

He nodded. "Yeah, we can hear you."

"*Alright, then give me a minute.*" Everyone saw him put down the walkie-talkie and type into the computer. He paused for a bit, then pressed one key a couple of times. He brought his walkie-talkie back to his face and said, "*Open sesame.*" He then pressed one key.



The doctor looked back at the group and told them, "It's open." Everyone was relieved, the Ives sighing in relief. Everyone saw him type more...

---

The gate had suddenly opened, much to everyone's relief. Dustin smiled and said, "Haha! I did it! I actually did it!" He and Jonathan got out of the booth to join everyone else in the group. Since they doubted the Ives and Byers got a ride there, they needed to provide one for them...

---

Hopper grinned and said, "That son of a bitch did it."

"We can escape," Terry added, smiling a little.

They saw the tech man stand up with his walkie-talkie and gun and said, *"I'll meet you guys outside."*

As everyone was rejoicing a little, Dr. Owens spotted a small Demogorgon from a stairwell. "Wait a second, chief."

Everyone's happy faces dropped as the man in question asked, "What is it?"

He pointed at the screen where he saw the small Demogorgon. "The east stairwell's not clear anymore." Now everyone was worried about Bob again.

*"Is something wrong?"* Bob could probably hear what the two men said.

"Well, uh, we've got some company," he answered him.

*"Where?"*

"The west stairwell."

Bob looked still for a second, then went back to the computer. *"Hold on, I got an idea."* They all saw him type on the keyboard again, wondering what the hell he was doing now. And then, they saw some sprinklers go off on the east corridor, then the west stairwell. The Demogorgon screeched in disgust and began running up and away

from the water. Everyone was surprised that scared it off.

"Oh, okay..." He looked at everyone else. "That seemed to work." He then told Bob, "Now, get outta there! Go, go, go!" Everyone then saw him leave again. That was cue for everyone to get the hell out of the room now.

As Hopper carried Will up on his shoulder again, he stopped when Dr. Owens said, "Hold on a second, chief."

He turned to him and asked, "What?"

He then handed him a walkie-talkie. "Take this." He did so, looking a little puzzled.

"Why?"

"I'll let you know if there's any more surprises. Now, go." He didn't move when he said that. "GO!" He was really going to leave this old son of a bitch behind. Old and tough, apparently.

...

He was the first to come out, using his flashlight to find any surprises while pointing his assault rifle in the same direction. The Ives came out second, then Joyce. They all then quietly followed the police chief to the nearest exit.

...

After a bit, they got into the lobby. Jane, Terry, and Hopper with Will got outside, the door buzzing when Jane opened it. When they stopped, they looked around, noticing Joyce wasn't with them. Terry and Hopper spotted her still inside, possibly waiting for Bob to come out...even though it was too damn dangerous inside.

Before he could offer her to carry Will, the dirty-blond-haired woman ran back inside. As much as Hopper wanted to shout out her name, it wasn't a good idea in this situation, so he let her get in.

...

"Joyce!" Terry whisper-shouted to her friend. "Come on!"

She ignored that and muttered, "Come on, baby. You can make it..." She knew that she was waiting for Bob, but it was still too dangerous to wait inside.

...

Hopper sighed deeply and asked Jane, "You mind holding Will?" She shook her head as she held her arms out and he handed the unconscious boy to her. He wasn't that hard to carry for her, so she held him as Hopper went inside to meet up with the girls.

...

"Joyce, he'll meet us outside," Terry told her, moving her shoulder a little.

She shook her head, not looking at her. "I'm not going until I know he's here."

Hopper got in, walking right next to them. "We need to go," he told them.

Terry looked up at him and sighed. "She's not leaving until she sees Bob." He sighed as well. "Protect her until then, okay?" He nodded and readied his assault rifle, in case any of the Demogorgons pop up.

However, Bob appeared and slammed the door on the Demogorgon that was chasing him. He turned back to see the three adults, specifically Joyce. Both of them smiled at each other...before the monster burst out and pounced on Bob. All of them were aghast to see that, Joyce screaming, "NOOO!" He tried to get it off, but it was no use as it dug its claws on the helpless man's sides, making him scream in pain. "NOOOOOO!" Terry and Hopper was just as horrified as she was seeing that.

The police chief began shooting at the Demogorgon as it began to devour Bob, blood leaking from his stomach and throat now. "NOOOOOOO!" Now Joyce was crying as she witnessed this. It roared as more Demogorgons came out, making the situation a lot more dire. They all knew they needed to get the hell out of there, even

though Joyce was still crying and screaming about her boyfriend getting murdered.

Hopper began shooting at them too and began backing away, the dirty-blonde-haired woman shouting, "We need to go!" She then grabbed Joyce and pulled her back outside, reaching her hand out and yelling from the top of her lungs, "BOB!" Terry saw that Hopper was following her too. She opened the door, her friend crying out her boyfriend's name once again as he screamed for the last time.

...

They got out, Joyce sobbing and crying out, "NO!"

Jane looked aghast, asking, "Wh-what happened?!" Hopper got Will up onto his shoulder again before everyone saw the Demogorgons run and charge at the door to break it.

"NO! NO! NOOOO!" She tried to break free from Terry's grip, but she held her tight.

"I'M SORRY, JOYCE, BUT HE'S GONE!" she told her. "BOB'S GONE, JOYCE!" To hear that made Jane's heart drop. He was such a good man and...to have him be gone, it...

"There's no way we can save him now!" Hopper told the brunette. "That's why we need to GO!"

Just then, they heard a car moving in and honking. Everyone turned to see Jonathan and Kali pull in, the auburn-haired teen shouting, "COME ON, GET IN!" Everyone got there in quite the hurry since the Demogorgons could break out at any second.

...

Jonathan's car and Hopper's car drove right back to the entrance, seeing the rest of the Party and Steve waiting there. Jonathan honked the horn, everyone scrambling out of the way. Jonathan's car drove away, but Hopper's stopped. Terry, who was sitting on the passenger's seat, told everyone, "Get in!"

"The trunk's open!" Hopper added.

They went to the back, Steve opening the trunk and letting the kids come in right before he did, shutting it and yelling, "Alright, let's go!" Finally, the car had driven away. Most of them had survived...

And one needed to be left behind because it was too late for him.

---

Everyone was now in the Byers's home for shelter. It was a little quiet. Jonathan was near Will, who was laid onto a couch, petting his hair and whispering, "I'm sorry, bud..." Kali got next to him and placed a hand on his shoulder for support, looking solemn. "I'm sorry that I wasn't there...I should have been there, like a good brother..." Steve had also placed a hand on his shoulder for support, feeling absolutely bad for him, despite his conflicting feelings about him and Kali running away together.

Hopper was talking to the higher authorities on the phone, being really angry and irritated at who was on the phone with him. The kids sat at the dinner table, Terry being in front of the sink and looking out the window in fear of more Demogorgons coming. When he hung up, everyone in the dining room looked at him. "They thought you were lying, did they?" Dustin asked him.

He deeply sighed and answered, "We'll see."

That wasn't the answer Jane wanted. "We'll see?" she repeated, sounding disbelieved. "We can't just stay here while those monsters are loose!"

Terry approached her daughter, grabbed her shoulder, and said, "Jane-

She looked up at her. "I'm serious, Mama! We can't stay here and...and expect those THINGS to not find us!"

"We stay here and wait for help, kid," Hopper told her sternly. "That's our only option right now." He then left to go be with Joyce, who was in her room by herself, still mourning over Bob's death. The tomboy drew her lips to a line and huffed, Terry holding her close to calm her down. Hopefully, Hopper could make Joyce calm down as well, even though her boyfriend got mauled right before her very

eyes...

The fact that she used to work there now felt like a stab to her chest. Plus...there was Michael. She hoped to God that he'll be alright, that those Demogorgons won't find him.

...

Everyone remained silent for what felt like a while, all being completely solemn. Jane looked at the phone, hoping the authorities believed Hopper and were on their way. She then looked at the bunch of puzzles Bob brought for Will before he, her, Joyce, and Will left to find Hopper and her mom. Seeing that made her think of something.

She got out of her mom's hold and walked to the puzzles, holding one of them and asking, "Did you guys know that...Bob was the original founder of Hawkins A.V.?"

They looked at her, Lucas asking, "Really?"

Her solemn look softened as she turned to them. "Yeah. He petitioned the school to start it, then started a fundraiser to buy the equipment." She walked back to the table. "Mr. Clarke learned a lot from him."

Terry actually smiled a little and stated, "I donated to that fundraiser because it seemed like a good club and...he was good kid."

Jane smiled back at her and asked her friends, "That's pretty awesome, isn't it?"

They all nodded, even Max, the two boys saying, "Yeah."

She placed the blue block on the table, her smile disappearing. "That's why we can't let him die in vain."

"Well, what can we do, Jane?" the curly-haired boy asked her. "The chief's right, we got no other choice but to wait for help. We can't stop those Demo-dogs on our own."

Max gave him a weird look. "'Demo-dogs'?"

He looked at her. "You know..." He used his hands to symbolize the words. "Demogorgon. Dogs." He placed his hands together. "Demos-dogs. It's like a compound." Jane sighed at this, but then thought of something. "You know, like-"

The red-haired girl nodded. "Okay, okay, I get it."

He nodded a little meekly and looked at the curly-haired tomboy. "I mean, if it was just Dart, then MAYBE we have a chance."

"But there's a whole army now," Lucas added. This made Jane's idea expand, her eyes widening a little.

"Exactly."

"The army..." she muttered. "His army."

Everyone gave her a puzzled look. "His' army, sweetie?" Terry questioned.

She nodded. "Yeah, his army. If we can stop the shadow monster, then we can stop his army." The kids' eyes widened as well as Terry before she went to Will's room. They followed her.

"You mean, like what he saw on the field?" Dustin asked her.

"Yes," she answered as she entered into his room and grabbed her drawing of the monster in question. He handed it to him, everyone looking at it.

"That's what he saw?" her mom asked her. She just nodded as an answer, the woman realizing where her daughter was getting at. "Wait." The rest of the kids looked up at her as she looked at them. "Dr. Owens said that it was like a virus."

"That is a virus?" Max asked her.

"He infected him like one, so it's the only logical conclusion."

"And this virus connects him to the tunnels?"

"The tunnels, the monsters, the Upside Down, everything," Jane

answered her. "If the vines feel pain, Will does too."

"And so does Dart," Lucas stated.

She nodded at him. "Just like what Mr. Clarke taught us, the hive-mind."

Max looked confused again. "Hive-mind?"

"A collective consciousness," Dustin explained to her. "It's practically a super-organism."

Jane pointed at the shadow monster. "And that's what's controlling everything. It's the brain."

Dustin's eyes widened in shock. "Like the Mind Flayer." Jane also looked shocked while Lucas snapped his fingers and pointed at him, knowing what the hell he was talking about.

Now Terry was just as confused as Max, both of them asking, "The what?" The woman assumed it must be from the game they loved to play.

---

**Stopping right here. What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**Why was it so painful for me to write Bob's death, even though I've seen it before...? :( Yeah, sorry that he's still gotta die here...but at least he won't die in vain.**

**Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**



## 48. Are You Ready for This?

Here's my Christmas gift to you guys! Enjoy!

---

Back in the dining room, Dustin set down and opened the Dungeons and Dragons manual, everyone (with the exception of Joyce) grouped up and looking at it. As he got to the page the Mind Flayer was at, he told everyone else as he pointed at the picture, "The Mind Flayer."

Hopper looked puzzled. "What the hell is that?" he asked him.

"It's a monster from an unknown dimension. It's so ancient that it doesn't even know where it originated. It enslaves races from different dimensions by taking over their brains with its highly-developed psionic powers."

The police chief sighed. "Oh my God, it's just a kid's game. None of this is real."

He gave him a disapproving glare. "Okay, first of all, it's not a kid's game. Second of all, this is just a manual."

Terry also looked at him. "As unbelievable as it sounds to me, Jim, it's the only good analogy we got to explain that thing." Jane was a little confused about her mom calling the chief Jim, but she decided to let it slide since it was important right now.

Kali looked at the picture and said, "So this mind flyer-

"FLAYER, Kali, Mind FLAYER," he corrected her.

She huffed and shook her head. "What does it want? What can it gain?"

"It wants to conquer us. It believes it's the master race."

"Like the Germans?" Steve asked, Kali giving him a weird look as well as Dustin.

"Ya mean the Nazis?"

Realizing he didn't say that right the first time, he nodded and said, "Y-yeah, yeah, yeah, the Nazis."

"Uh..." Terry saw Hopper rub his face, probably frustrated. "If the Nazis were from another dimension, then yeah." He looked at everyone else. "It views other races, like us, as inferior."

"It wants to spread and take over other dimensions," Jane added.

"Bringing the destruction of our world as we know it," Lucas also added.

Steve looked like he was about to freak out at any second. "Oh, great. That's great. That's fantastic." He walked away from the table and ran his hands through his hair. "Jesus Christ..."

Kali was just as frustrated as him, but tried to keep her cool. "So if that thing..." She pointed at the picture of the Mind Flayer. "If it's like a brain controlling everything...if we kill it..."

"We kill everything it controls," her sister finished for her.

"We'd win," Dustin stated.

"Theoretically," the dark-haired boy also stated.

"Alright, then how do we kill this thing?" Hopper asked, taking the manual and looking at it. "You shoot fireballs at it or something?"

Dustin actually chuckled at that. "Oh no, no, no, not Fireballs. You just summon an undead army because..." Hopper gave him a look of disbelief, knowing that the solution he was saying was absolutely impossible and ridiculous. "Zombies...you know, don't have brains, so they wouldn't be, uh, affected by the Mind Flayer..." He shrugged. "It's just a game, it's just a game."

Hopper couldn't feel more frustrated about this. "Then why the hell are we here...?" He closed the manual and slammed it back on the table, beginning to leave.

The curly-haired boy gave him a disapproving look. "I thought we were waiting for your MILITARY BACK-UP!"

He turned to him with a sharp glare. "We ARE!"

Jane returned his sharp glare. "How are the...the MILITARY going to solve this?! You can't just solve this with guns!"

"You don't know that! We don't know ANYTHING!"

"Jim!" Terry shouted at him, making him look at her. "We DO know something: it killed everyone in the Lab!"

"And we know that the monsters are gonna molt again!" Lucas added, now the police chief looking at him.

"AND we know it's only a matter of time before those tunnels reach to this town!" Dustin also added.

"They're right," said...Joyce, still sounding distraught. Everyone turned to her, surprised to see her out of her room. Though her eyes were red from the tears, she looked a little lax, nodding. "We have to kill it." Hopper frowned and began to approach her. "I want...to kill it."

"I know, me too," he replied to her.

"I-"

"Me too, Joyce, okay? But how the hell are we gonna do that? We don't exactly know what we're dealing with here." She huffed shakily in disbelief of what he said.

Jane looked at her unconscious friend and said, "But Will does." Everyone looked at her before looking at the boy in question. She slowly walked to him and continued, "Only Will could know how to destroy this thing. I mean, he's connected to it, right? He'll know its weakness."

"But I thought we can't trust him anymore," Max replied. "He's a spy for the Mind Flayer now, isn't he?"

She nodded as everyone got out of the dining room and into the living room with the tomboy. "Yeah, but..." She thought up of another idea. "If he doesn't know where he is, then he can't spy." That idea

sparked up how to execute it for everyone else.

...

Jane and Hopper got out to the backyard, the girl opening the shed up and turning on the light. The police chief looked inside and nodded. "Yeah...this can work."

...

When Hopper cleaned out everything in the shed, Steve and Kali worked together to staple dark cloth and put duct tape around the interior of the shed. As he held up one edge of the cloth and stapled it to the wall, his girlfriend looked up at him and wondered if she should talk to him or not. She's been gone for a couple days, he must have been worried sick.

She sighed and placed the tape on the small shelf she was taping, saying, "Hey, Steve?" He got down from the chair he was standing on and looked at her. "I just wanted to say that..." He leaned against the wall a little. "I'm sorry for leaving without telling you." Oh, that? He was going to plainly say that it was alright, but then she added, "I didn't want to put you in danger again, so..."

Wait, what? He gave her a puzzled look. "Danger?"

"Me and Jonathan could have been caught doing what we did and paid the price. I didn't want to get you involved if that ever happened."

So...she left and didn't tell him because...she wanted to protect him? As much as he was flattered by that...he scoffed. "Kali, no offense, but I beat a goddamn Demogargoyle-or-whatever with a bat last year. I even saved those little shits from being killed from a bunch of those Demo-dog things like, what, a few hours ago? Some stupid scientists can't scare me."

She chuckled a little at that, but made it die off quick. "But we could have been charged by the law and-"

"Well, you didn't, did ya, Kal?"

She gave him a stern look and crossed her arms. "Steve-"

He sighed and put his staple gun down, getting closer to her. "Listen, I'm just saying that I'm not helpless, alright? I know what's done is done, but the least you can do is call me to tell me that you're leaving."

She sighed as well, knowing that what he said last was right. "I know that, but I also know that they can trace calls, so I wouldn't call you."

Well...that was a good point. But still... "Then why didn't you meet up with me to tell me?"

She was about to answer that, saying, "I..." She then trailed off when she realized why she didn't even want to talk to him. Yes, she didn't tell him that she was leaving because she wanted to protect him, but there was also how he acted earlier that day when she asked him about what happened at the party...

She huffed and shook her head. "Let's just finish this." She then grabbed his staple gun and handed it to him.

He looked baffled to see her try to avoid the question, making him say, "Kal-"

"Now, Steve." Her voice became more stern now. He sighed, giving up for now and getting up on his chair to staple the black cloth onto the wall.

---

In the kitchen, Jane went through the drawer below the sink to get some materials out of it. Right behind her was Max, taping pieces of cardboard together for the chair they were going to use for their plan. She looked at the curly-haired girl, thinking about what Lucas had told her about Mike...and how close Jane was to him. She smiled a little and ripped off a piece of tape, saying, "Now I know why Mike's your Mage."

She looked back at her, surprised. "What?"

She looked up at her. "Lucas told me all about him."

Now she looked confused. "Why?" He wasn't supposed to do that...it was part of the rules.

"Well...to make me understand why you guys didn't want me to join your meetings and stuff. I mean..." She shrugged before taping once cardboard leg together. "I thought you guys were treating me like garbage because I'm new."

Jane shook her head. "That's not why."

"I know. I'm just saying, he told me so that I would get why you guys treated me the way you did."

They did treat her a bit unfairly, especially Jane for a few days. "Sorry."

Max shook her head. "No, it's alright. After what I've seen tonight, I get it. I mean, it's so unbelievable, but so real."

Jane smiled a little and went back to getting the supplies from below the sink. "Yeah..."

"I'm just saying though, Mike? From what Lucas told me, he sounds like he was really awesome."

Her smile faltered a bit. "He was." Usually, thinking about him would bring both joy and sadness to her. Now it brought her both sadness and a hint of anger due to what he did to Will back at school. Whatever the reason he had for doing that, it wouldn't stop this hint of anger she had for him doing it. She closed the drawer and grabbed all the stuff she pulled out of it before she left.

Max wondered if she should bring up the question of whether or not she should become part of the party, but Jane sounded pretty melancholic when she said, "He was." Plus, "Zoomer" wasn't a thing, right? Why bring that to their party...?

---

Soon, everyone used whatever was available to cover up every inch and corner of the shed, taping and stapling them on the walls. The chairs were eventually set up while Jonathan carried Will to the shed. When he got there, he and Jane tied him up with the cut

clothing line, from his wrists to his ankles. Jane then set up the lights and taped them above the chair across from him. Lucas plugged them both in, lighting them up.

They were all set now, seeing the unconscious boy being limp on the chair he was completely tied onto. Only Joyce, Hopper, Terry, Jonathan, and Jane were in the shed. Joyce and Hopper looked at each other, him asking quietly, "Are you ready for this?"

She nodded and whispered, "Yes." He then walked towards the boy and got out a small piece of cloth. He then opened the gallon of bleach and only dampened the cloth with it for a second. He then placed it under the boy's nose and in a couple of seconds, he gasped, his eyes wide open from its strong smell.

As he regained his breath, he looked around, seeing everyone around...where was he? He couldn't recognize this place. When he tried to move, he noticed that he was tied down, looking down and being surprised. "Wh-what...?" he said, trying to break away from the wires, but failing. "What is this?" He looked around, still not knowing where he was, and continued trying to break free from the wires. "What's going on?" No one answered, having solemn faces. "Why am I tied up?"

Joyce walked in front of him and crouched down, saying, "Will, baby, we just wanna talk to you. We're not going to hurt you, okay?"

He looked like he didn't give a damn about what she said and asked in a louder voice, "Where am I?"

Hopper also walked to him and crouched down a little, showing him his drawing of the the mind flayer. "You recognize this, kid?" he asked him. He still looked concerned about where he was than what he was looking at, making him shake his head. "Do you recognize this?" He still shook his head.

"Hey." He looked at his mom once again. "We just wanna help you. But if we need to do that, then we must understand how to kill it."

Now Will looked angry, yelling, "Why am I tied up?!" That shocked everyone in the shed for a moment, especially the brown-haired

woman herself. "Why am I tied up?! WHY AM I TIED UP?!" As he kept yelling that, the lights began flickering rapidly, everyone else getting worried for him as he thrashed around. Hopper was holding him back as best as he could. "LET ME GO! LET ME GO! LET ME GO! LET ME GO!" His voice got deeper as he screamed.

---

Everyone else, who was in the house, saw the lights flickering rapidly as well. Kali was the first to look out the window to the backyard before everyone else followed suit. They all wondered what the hell was happening in there. Hopefully, it wasn't the worst-case scenario.

---

Will continued yelling to let him go as Joyce buried her face in her hands to hide the fact that she was going to cry and Hopper was still holding him back. Everyone felt awful to see him act like this...so possessed and unlike himself.

However, he began to falter in his yelling, then his thrashing around. "Let me go...let me go...let me..." The lights went back to normal as he began to calm down. "Go..." Everyone was relieved that was over, seeing that maybe he wasn't all that possessed after all. Still...

Joyce took a deep breath and sat on the chair across from her son, looking at him straight in the eye. She managed to loosen herself up a little and give him a small smile. "Do you know what March 22nd is?" she asked him. He didn't answer and looked down with a saddened face. "It's your birthday, YOUR birthday." He looked up at her a little as she continued, "When you turned eight, I bought you that huge box of crayons. Do you remember that? It was 120 colors." He still wasn't saying anything.

She still went on, "All of your friends gave you Star Wars toys, but all you wanted to do to draw with your new colors. You drew this big spaceship, but it wasn't from a movie. I-it was YOUR spaceship." She smiled big and pointed at him, her eyes tearing up from the happy memory. "You called it a 'Rainbow Ship'. And you must've used..." She shrugged. "...EVERY color in your box." She shook her head, still looking happy. "So, I...I took it to Melvald's and put it up. I told EVERYONE who came in, 'My son drew this.'" Terry also smiled, remembering that when she entered in the store that five years ago.



She thought it was cute and a bit impressive that he used every color she could think of. "And you were embarrassed...but I was so proud of you. So, SO proud." He still didn't answer, but had a slight change in his expression.

Jonathan breathed shakily, but then decided to ask, "Remember the day Dad left?" He walked to his little brother as he looked at him now. He crouched down and continued, "We stayed up all night building Castle Byers, just the way you drew it. It took so long...because you were bad at hammering." Him and Joyce began to chuckle at that. "You missed the nail every time." Now the boy's lip began to quiver a little as his brother began crying a little. "It started to rain too, but we still stayed out there. We were sick for, like, a week after that. But we still had to finish that, didn't we?" The boy now began shaking a little, one of his hands moving a little. "We had to." The boy looked like he was close to breaking, feeling a flurry of emotions hearing these stories.

Since sharing memories with him made him see that way, Jane decided to join in too. Though her eyes were watery, she smiled a little and asked in a sentimental voice, "Remember the day we first met, Will?" He looked at her next, now feeling a warm feeling when he saw her. She walked into the light and continued, "I-it was the first day of kindergarten." She sniffled as she began to cry a little, making her mom feel sad. "I...I knew nobody, so I had no friends. The girls made fun of me for being so quiet and alone and...not looking girly. I thought I was always going to be alone, that nobody would like me." Terry felt awful that her daughter felt that way during the first day of kindergarten, but this wasn't about her.

She sniffled again, wiping the tears from her face before new ones came. "During recess, I sat on one of the swings alone and thought about what the other kids said about me. And then suddenly, I saw you come up and sit on the swing next to me. I didn't think you were there to talk to me, but then you said, 'Hey.' I looked at you and said, 'Hey' too." She then smiled and continued, "You talked to me about how lonely I looked and how mean the other kids didn't like you. Then I said they didn't like me either. You finally asked, 'Do you wanna be my friend?'" She sniffled once again, her smile widening. "I said 'Yes.' I said yes." She chuckled a little. "I never felt so happy in

my life when that happened. I was so happy that when I got home, I told my Mama about you." Terry had smiled as well as everyone else in the shed. "It was the best thing I've ever done in my life...because now I'm friends with you. You're a great friend, Will." The emotions Will felt when she talked about that memory strengthened a lot.

Terry was the last to join into that, saying, "I remember when I first met you. Do you?" He looked at her, her being in the light with everyone else. "It was a week after Jane told me you were her friend. Jane asked me if she could have you over for a sleepover and I said, 'Yes.'" She paused to crouch down, his eyes trained on her. "You came over and you were very kind. You even had good manners for your age when it was dinner. It was no wonder Jane liked you as a friend." The girl mentioned smiled at that. "In fact, before I went to sleep, you gave me a drawing of...well...me." She pointed at herself as he continued staring at her with teary eyes. "You drew that for me because you thought I was nice and pretty, just like your mom." Joyce smiled at that as well. "I still have it because it was so sweet of you to draw that for me. I'm glad you like me as much as your mom." His emotions began to strengthen more by that...

"Will...baby..." Joyce said to him softly, the boy looking at his mother once again. "If you're in there...then please...please just talk to us." He looked like he was about to cry at any second, that he would finally show himself. "Can you do that for me, honey? Can you please talk to us?" His breath became shaky and his lip was quivering. "Please...I love you so much, baby." He was about to break...

But then, his expression went blank and he said coldly, "Let me go." Everyone felt completely saddened that sharing memories with him didn't get him to break, Joyce sighing and sniffing with Jane and Jonathan. What the hell were they going to do now...?

Hopper's sad expression changed when he noticed Will tapping both his fingers against his chair in some kind of pattern. Then he thought of something.

---

Everyone that was in the shed (with the exception of Will) went back inside the house, Hopper grabbing a piece of paper and pulling out a pen. As he sat down at the table and clicked his pen open, everyone

gathered around him. "What happened?" Dustin asked.

"I think he's talking to us," the man said while scribbling something on the paper. "But not with words." He finished scribbling, everyone seeing that he drew out a message in Morse code. He then proceeded to translate it, writing the letters underneath each symbol.

"The hell is that?" asked Steve.

"Morse code," most of the kids answered.

"H...E...R...E..." The police chief spelled out the message as he finished translating.

"Here," everyone read out loud. A flicker of hope came up to all of them.

"Will's still in there," he stated, looking up at everyone. "He's communicating with us through Morse code." With his fingers? Well, what else could he do? However, this raised everyone's hopes up, especially those that were in the shed with him.

---

Jonathan had brought a boombox to the shed, playing "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" by the Clash. With this, he, Joyce, Jane, and Terry would be able to share their memories with him while working out a system. Hopper would pay attention to his fingers, then send the Morse code to someone back in the house to write it out and translate it. Steve was in charge of getting the code, the kids were writing out the dots and dashes, and Kali was going to write out the translation.

During this process, Jane told Will, "So then, the party had to escape into the sewers before suddenly getting swarmed by these big insect things. You all were still level one..."

Further into her story, she also said, "And you casted Fog Cloud and saved us! You saved the WHOLE party, Will!"

...

Terry then said to Will, "When you and Jane were riding back to our home, you fell and scraped your knee. I got out and tended your knee

inside. You were crying, but I keep telling you that it's going to be okay..."

...

Joyce was telling him two more memories before...

---

Kali was done with writing out the message. She held up the cardboard she was writing on, the kids and Steve looking straight at it. All of them read out loud, "Close gate." Gate?

The phone on the wall suddenly rang, shocking them. Dustin and Kali ran up to him, him exclaiming, "Shit-SHIT!" He then picked up the phone before putting it back. They were all relieved for a second before it started ringing again. Frustrated, Kali ripped the phone right out of the wall and threw it, much to everyone's surprise. She sighed deeply and rubbed the side of her face.

"H-he didn't hear that, right?" Max asked.

"It's just a stupid phone," Steve replied, looking at her. "Could be anywhere...right?"

---

Will had noticed the ringing as well as everyone else in that shed. His eyes suddenly closed, his breathing became fast, and his eyes moved around while closed. With everyone confused, Joyce moved his arm a little and asked, "H-hey, can you hear me, honey?"

Hopper expected the worst, crouching down to him. "It knows," he stated solemnly, shocking everyone. "It knows where we are." It took the brunette woman a mere second to grab the full needle and stick it into his arm. His fast breathing faltered before he was completely knocked out. To make sure those Demo-dogs weren't coming, Hopper, Jane, and Jonathan went outside. In a few seconds, they could hear screeching from a far distance, their heart rates skyrocketing at the sound.

---

The people in the home heard that as well, looking out fearfully as

Dustin muttered, "That's not a good sound..."

---

Hopper, Jane, and Jonathan got back into the shed, Jonathan yelling, "They're coming!"

"What...?" Joyce asked in shock. None of them wasted any time to untie the unconscious boy, Hopper eventually cutting the wires off. Joyce grabbed the boy and got out of the shed with everyone else.

They all got inside in the living room, Hopper eventually appearing with a shotgun and an assault rifle. He saw the kids looking through a window, making him shout, "Hey! Away from the window!" They looked at him and did so. He then handed the shotgun to Terry, much to her surprise.

"I can only shoot with a pistol, Jim," she told him. He sighed in disbelief.

"I can shoot with that, Mum," Kali said, walking towards her.

She looked at her adoptive daughter with wide eyes. "Kali?"

"Trust me, I know how to handle it. Jonathan's taught me." Both her and Steve looked surprised about that, but then she handed the shotgun to her older daughter. She unlocked the safety and with Hopper with his assault rifle, pointed it at the window. Steve joined in with his bat. Terry got a broom, Lucas got out his wrist rocket, and Jane held an empty candle holder, all to defend themselves.

They all felt very tense as they heard some close growling from outside, Max crying out, "Where are they?!" There were some more growling, raising their anxiety and tenseness a lot. Then there was loud growling from their right, all of them turning and getting ready to face them or escape.

"The hell are they doing...?" the Indian girl muttered, all of them seeing the bushes from outside rustle. They kept looking through there, expecting those monsters to come out of there. Suddenly, they heard loud snarling from the front, making them all face that way again. Those at the front were still ready to kill the Demo-dogs as

their screeches continued to be heard...as well as some other noises like snapping and throwing. Everyone was becoming a little confused about hearing those noises as well, but still braced themselves once again for the attack.

But then, the screeching stopped when they heard bones snapping once again, this time closer. Then, in a mere second, one of the windows broke open with one of the Demo-dogs. Everyone turned and screamed, Hopper and Kali aiming at the Demo-dog as it crashed against a table. However, it was completely limp and unmoving, everyone getting more confused. Hopper and the rest got closer to it to make sure it wasn't moving, Dustin muttering, "Holy shit..."

"Is it dead?" the redhead asked. The police chief took it upon himself to move its head a little with his foot. It didn't seem to respond, giving them all the answer they needed.

They all faced the door when they heard a creak, bracing themselves once again. The door began unlocking itself, then it opened. A foot in a black combat boot appeared before the person themselves stepped right inside. Hopper and Terry looked shocked at who it was, the man putting his assault rifle down. The person that just entered...

Was Michael, his nose bleeding. He looked different with his punkish, street-rat-like look...but it was him.

Everyone else looked shocked to see him, especially the kids. Jane, however, had watery eyes the second she saw him. She walked towards him and stopped, making sure it was really him after all this time...and it was. He locked eyes with her, his eyes getting watery from seeing her too. He was so happy to see her again, smiling big and stifling a sob. She covered her mouth as tears ran down her face. She began to sob a little while conflicting emotions went over her. On one hand, she was so happy to see him again...

But on the other...she wasn't so happy because of a certain incident...

---

**Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God...they've finally reunited...at last...although it won't be all sunshine and rainbows. How was this chapter, by the way? Any typos or mistakes I might've**

missed?

We have reached to the final stretch of this season, folks. After the final episode, this is complete until Season 3 comes out, which I'm excited about! Can't wait to see what it has in store and what I could change for this AU!

Anyways...

Yeah, I did change the conversation with Kali and Steve in the shed. It's for good reason though. I also altered the conversation with Max and Jane a little due to them getting friendly earlier in this season, especially with Jane told her that Mike WAS awesome...

Speaking of Jane, I thought it would make sense with her personality in this AU that she would be sad and lonely during the first day of kindergarten because of how much of an outcast she was. I also thought Will would be the one to come hang out with her because of that and ask if she wants to be friends with him. It explains how they're very close to one another in this AU.

I hope you guys don't mind me adding Terry talking about a couple of memories to Will as well. I thought it would make sense since Will and Jane are close friends, it'd be a no-brainer for him to have a couple of good memories with her mom too.

Merry Christmas/Happy Holidays! I'll see you all in the next chapter! :D

## 49. It's Not Like Before

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

Mike stepped closer to Jane, overjoyed about seeing her again. Removing her hands from her mouth, she stammered out, "M-Michael...?"

His smile widened when he heard her say his name...in real time. "Jane." He was about to hug her, but to his surprise...she shoved him away, looking upset. He looked both puzzled and shocked.

"Why, Mike...?" He still looked puzzled as she stormed to him. "Why did you do it?! WHY DID YOU THROW WILL LIKE THAT?!" She shoved him one more time, now making him look sorrowful. Everyone looked shocked to hear this, especially the adults. Joyce was completely dumbfounded by that statement, but Terry and Hopper felt completely baffled that they both had actually seen each other at school the other day and that...he threw Will.

The freckled boy's eyes became teary. He should have known that she knew it was him that threw Will like that, though she still went after her friend afterwards. To be honest with himself...he came to regret it. Still, it hurt him to see Jane act this way towards him. He gulped and said, "I'm sorry..."

She scoffed, sniffled, and wiped the tears that came out of her eyes. "That's all you need to say?"

He shook his head. "I...I'm stupid." Her angered expression softened a little. "I wish I never did it."

She frowned. "Why did you, though?"

Tears began to run down his cheeks. "I thought...I thought he was going to...ask you to..." He sniffled. "The Snow Ball." Her eyes widened. "I wanted to go with you..." She thought that was the reason why he did it...even though that wasn't a good one. "You promised...I thought he was gonna break it." He wiped his tears away. "I'm sorry,



Jane. I'll never do it again. I'm stupid."

She shook her head and hugged him, much to his surprise. "No, you're not, Mike." Feeling comforted to hold her again, he hugged her back and let more tears. "But please don't do that ever again. Promise?"

He sniffled and nodded. "I promise."

While everyone was feeling better about the situation, some still had to process that Mike threw Will...maybe at the school. For Max, it was quite the shocker to find out that the asshole that ran into her at school was Mike all along, maybe running from that throwing Will situation. For Hopper and Terry, it was definitely at the school. They definitely had words to say to him about that and for Terry, her daughter too because she told her that she didn't see anything strange (in other words, she didn't see Mike). But for now...

After a bit, they broke their hug and looked into each other's eyes. Jane smiled through her tears. "I missed you so much, Mike."

He smiled at her through his tears as well. "I missed you too, Jane."

She kept her smile. "I never gave up on you. I called to you...every night for-"

"353 days." She looked surprised that he knew that, him nodding. "I heard."

Her smile dropped. "Y-you heard?" His smile dropped as well when he nodded again. "Th-then why didn't you answer?"

Hopper and Terry looked at each other with guilty faces, Hopper whispering, "I'll take the blame."

She shook her head and faced the two kids, saying to them, "We wouldn't let him, sweetheart." She turned to her and Hopper with a completely shocked look on her face.

"W-we'?"

The police chief sighed. "Me and her." The tomboy could feel her

blood run cold. Her mom...and the chief...they were...they knew he was...?

They both walked to Mike, him looking upset at the two. "What the hell, bud? Where've you been?" the man asked him.

"Where've you two been?" he asked them in a voice that matched his expression before they all went in for a hug.

"I'm so glad you're alright..." Terry whispered to him.

Jane felt the anger she felt at Mike not too long ago rise up again, this time for both Hopper and her mom. "Y-you've been hiding him?" she asked in a shaky voice. The two adults looked at her as she looked at Terry. "Y-you have your night shift!"

She sighed and straightened up. "We can talk in private."

Her daughter nodded. "Yeah...you and Hopper." Hopper sighed as the three went into a room to talk. Mike looked worried, knowing that this revelation was hurting her, as it was for him to be away from her for 353 days.

...

As Hopper closed the door, Terry turned to Jane and said, "I quit the night shift to help Hopper take care of Mike."

"What?!" Jane exclaimed, the two adults tensing up. Never mind how she was still earning more money...

"Kid, calm down-" Hopper told her, but she cut him off.

"Why haven't you told me about him?!" She looked at Hopper. "And you! WHY did you hide him?!"

He sighed again and put his assault rifle down. "Listen, Jane, the more people know about him, the more danger he's in," he answered.

"And the more danger our family could be in," her mom added. "We're just protecting him and I'm protecting our family-"

Jane looked baffled when she said they were protecting him. "What, do you think I would tell EVERYONE that he's still alive?!"

Terry huffed. "No, but I'm on thin ice with the Lab and I can't risk any more situations that'll lead to me DEAD and you and Kali orphans!"

The curly-haired girl gritted her teeth, more tears coming out. "Jane, calm down," Hopper said, making her look at him.

"How can I calm down when I've been LIED TO by my OWN mom?!" She pointed at her, the woman looking hurt.

He raised his hands up. "Listen, I was the one that brought up the idea to her." He could feel her sharp gaze pierce through him...like Mike's, a few days ago. However, he still kept his ground. "You don't need to be mad at her, alright?"

"I'm mad at you too!" She pointed at him. "YOU kept talking about him to me like he's GONE, JUST LIKE MAMA!" His lips drew to a thin line.

"Jane, don't get mad at him either-" Terry told her sternly.

She whipped her head to her. "What, are you two dating or something?! Is that why you guys kept him in secret and didn't tell me?!" They both fell silent, feeling cold for a second as they diverted their eyes away from hers. She looked appalled at their reactions, shaking her head and backing away from them. "No, no, no, no..."

The dirty-blonde-haired woman sighed and walked to her daughter. "Jane-"

"Why, Mama?"

"Jane, you got to believe me-"

"How can I believe you anymore?! After seeing that you KNEW Mike was alive and KEPT him in secret with...with HIM!" She pointed at Hopper, who looked damn well frustrated. "With that stupid, ugly, lying piece-of-shit police chief-"

"HEY!"

"-that's probably gonna be my new dad or something!"

"JANE!" She grabbed her daughter's shoulder tightly and shook her. "There is NOTHING between me and Hopper, okay?! NOTHING!" Jane's breathing became shaky as the man in question felt heartbroken to hear that. "We both worked together to give Mike a new home and take care of him! Nothing more! Do you understand?!" Her lip was quivering a little and she began crying again. Terry looked forlorn to yell those things to her own daughter, so she said in a soft voice, "I'm sorry for yelling at you like that, sweetheart, but it's the truth." The girl sniffled and closed her eyes, looking down. "We need you to understand this, okay?" She tried to hug her, but she was quick to get out of it.

"I don't understand, Mama!" she replied in a distressed voice. "I don't understand why you and him have to do this!" Terry began to cry as well, shedding a tear.

Despite being heartbroken by what Terry had said to her, Hopper felt just as awful for Jane as Terry was, so he walked towards her. "Listen, Jane. You don't need to understand right now, okay?" He pointed at the wall, actually pointing at Mike. "Just don't be mad at him too, okay? He's upset enough as he is-"

The curly-haired girl scoffed. "I'm not mad at him for this! I'm mad at YOU!" She pointed at him before pointing at her mom. "And YOU! I HATE YOU GUYS! I HATE YOU!" She shoved her mom when she got close.

Hopper made sure she didn't fall by putting a hand on her back before facing her again with a sad smile. "Y'know what? It's fine if you hate me-"

"It's NOT fine! NOTHING ABOUT THIS IS FINE!" She sniffled as the two adults came closer to her. "YOU'RE BOTH TRAITORS! LIARS!" She shoved her mom again, but she managed to capture her in a hug, which struggled to get out of. "YOU'RE BOTH LIARS! I CAN'T TRUST YOU TWO! NOT EVEN YOU, MAMA!" Those words hurt the woman, but she still hugged her, letting the tears come out. She knew that this awful situation was going to come eventually, but it still stung her hard. It didn't mean she shouldn't still show her daughter that she

still loves her. "LIARS! LIARS! LIARS!"

"Come on, kid," Hopper said solemnly as he joined in on the hug too.

"LIARS! Liars! Liars...liars..." She then broke down, sobbing and crying onto her mom's shoulder. Jane never felt so hurt about being betrayed before...but as time went by, she slowly became more comforted by her mom's embrace...and Hopper's as well. She just had a lot to process and...she didn't go over it well. She had a reason to be completely upset, but still...

...

Meanwhile, back in the living room, Mike gave Lucas and Dustin a hug, closing his eyes and smiling. "We missed you, Mike," Lucas said to him.

"I missed you guys too," he replied.

"We talked about you everyday," Dustin added as the three boys released from their hug. The freckled boy kept his smile until he saw Dustin, looking puzzled. He touched his front teeth, making him back away in confusion.

"Teeth?"

"What?"

"You have teeth?"

It took him a few seconds to realized that he was talking about his new front teeth. He smiled, exchanging that with Lucas before facing Mike again. "Oh, ya mean these pearls?" He pointed at them, making him nod. He then growled, getting a weirded-out reaction from him.

"What was that?" Mike asked. The African-American boy could only shake his head and face-palm.

"What?" asked Dustin. "It's the best way to show them off." Was it?

He shook his head. "No way, dude..."

A couple seconds later, Max walked up to him, looking very friendly and happy to meet him. He recognized her, being a little stiff. "Hey Mike, I'm Max," she greeted, holding her hand out to him and smiling. He only looked at it before looking up at her. She nervously laughed a little and added, "Sorry about calling you an asshole back at the school." Both Lucas and Dustin looked surprised to hear that, but then remembered that Jane said he threw Will back at the school, so they figured they must've bumped into each other there too. "I've heard a lot about you and I think you're awesome."

It was nice of her to say and she actually looked nice too. Plus, she was a friend of theirs, so he smiled back at her and shook her hand. "Thanks," he replied. The red-haired girl actually felt relieved that he wasn't mad at her for calling him an asshole. She couldn't wait to get to know him more. That was, when they're going to end the shit-show that was tonight.

Mike then walked to Joyce, the two hugging each other tight. "Hey..." she greeted him in a soft voice.

"I'm sorry about hurting Will," he whispered to her in a sad voice.

They released the hug as she looked him straight in the eyes. "You know what, sweetie?" She then held his shoulders. "It's okay. You're going to make up for it, right?"

He nodded. "Where is he? Can I see him?" She nodded back at him as she led him to Will's room.

She opened the door and they both got in. Mike saw the boy he saved last year, the boy he threw a few days ago...the boy he was going to save again, Will. He was unconscious, laying in bed with a blanket over him. He took a deep breath as he and Joyce crouched down to him. "Y-you see, he's not doing well..."

He nodded a little. "I know. I saw." During his bus trip, he used his powers to see what was going on. He saw what was happening with Will amongst everything else.

The brunette looked surprised that he knew what was going on with him, but became very curious. "Wh-what else did you see?"

...

Not much later, he entered into the dining room with her, looking at the message Kali wrote out on cardboard. Joyce suddenly knew where he was getting at, pointing at it. "You opened this gate before, right?" she asked him.

"Yes," he answered. Everyone else, including Jane, Hopper, and Terry, were getting to the dining room to hear everything.

"Do you think that if...if we can get you back there, then you can close it?" He looked at her straight in the eye. The hole he's created has gotten bigger than he ever imagined...

---

Meanwhile, Billy had to go around town to find his little sis-no, she wasn't his little sister. To him, she was a piece of shit. However, his dad and Susan came back and wanted him to cancel his date so he could find her, so that was what he was doing. Goddamn son of a bitch...

He drove away from the Ives's home because not only were the lights out, but no one answered the goddamn door. Thankfully, with this piece of paper Mrs. Sinclair gave him, there was another address he could go to because there were two places the kids would hang out at: the Ives's home...

And the Byers's home.

---

"It's not like before," Terry told everyone, who were all gathered up in the dining room. "It's grown much more."

"And, even considering that we can get in there..." Hopper added. "That place is crawling with those dogs-"

"Demo-dogs," Dustin corrected him. He and Terry glared at him.

"What was that?"

"Uh, I said Demo-dogs. Like..." He used his hands to make his point. "Demogorgon and dogs. Ya put them together, it sounds pretty

badass-"

"Dustin, is this important right now?" Terry asked him sternly.

He frowned and looked away. "N-no, it's not, m'am. I'm sorry."

Mike should have known there was going to be imminent danger when he gets back there. If he didn't know any better, he wouldn't want to go and close it. But after what's happened to him and everyone else today, he was determined to close it, no matter what. He looked up at his parental figures and said, "I can do it."

Not only did they gave him a worried look, but also Jane. "You're not hearing us, bud-" Hopper replied.

"I'm hearing you guys. I can do it." The hole was massive. How could he close it? His powers could be powerful, but...he was just a kid.

"Okay...even if Mike can, there's still another problem," Jane stated, everyone looking at her. "If the brain dies, so does the body."

Max looked puzzled. "I thought that was the point."

"It is, but..." She paused and sighed. "If we're REALLY right about this, if Mike closes the gate and kills the Mind Flayer's army..."

"Will will go out with them," Lucas finished for her in a solemn voice.

She nodded, looking sad. "Yeah, closing the gate will kill him." Everyone fell silent, wondering what the hell they should do now. Joyce had just remembered something though...and that something gave her a big realization.

...

Everyone got into his room, the brown-haired woman looking at the open window. "He likes it cold," she said.

"What?" Hopper asked.

"Will kept saying that to me." She was nodding a little before walking to the opened window. "He likes it cold." She closed it, facing her



unconscious son. "We keep giving that thing what it wants."

Almost everyone was catching up to what she was saying. "If this is a virus and Will's the host..." Kali began, looking at her friend's little brother.

"We have to make the host uninhabitable," Jonathan finished for her, being near his little brother.

"If that monster likes it cold..."

"We need to burn it out of him," Joyce said.

"That means we'll have to do that somewhere he doesn't know this time," Jane replied.

"Yeah, somewhere far away," Dustin added. This gave Hopper and Terry an idea, the two exchanging glances.

...

In the backyard, Kali and Steve was digging through the things Hopper threw out of the shed for heaters. While they were doing so, the Indian girl had this burning desire to continue the conversation they were having while covering the shed. She sighed and asked, "Steve?"

"Yeah?" he plainly replied.

"Do you want to know why else I didn't meet up with you to tell you that I was leaving?" He looked curious before realizing that she avoided that topic earlier in the shed. He didn't answer, but continued looking at her as he picked up a radio. She looked at him and said, "You acted weird that day, after the party."

He felt like shit when she brought that up. He knew he didn't act the best way when she confronted him about that. "Right...about that..." She looked up at him as she held up a fan and he dropped the radio he was holding to carry a bunch of Christmas lights. "I didn't think you would react very well if I told you what really happened at the party."

She looked concerned, remembering the rumors Jonathan told her about. "What happened, Steve? I want to know." He took a deep breath and dropped the Christmas lights, walking to her and crouching down to dig through the junk some more. "Are the rumors true?"

He shook his head, looking at her in disbelief. "No, they're bullshit."

She figured. "Then what happened?"

"You..." He took another deep breath, looking at her deep in the eyes. "You had an emotional breakdown in the bathroom."

She looked quite shocked to hear that. "What?"

Now they stopped digging through the junk, not breaking eye contact as she crouched down as well. "You came into the bathroom to wash off that punch stain off your dress and I tried to get you back home, but then..." He frowned, looking away from her and shaking his head. "You called yourself stupid for not listening to me, for pointing a gun at me last year, and...for arguing with Barbara before she died." She looked forlorn to hear all of that, Steve now looking into her eyes again. "You were crying and...I just felt like shit, y'know? I felt awful for you to hear you say all of that. I let you cry on me for a while, then you just...cried yourself to sleep. Then I brought you home." She looked away from him, trying to process all that he said to her. She broke down crying and blaming herself for those things...she couldn't believe that Murray's read of her hit her harder than before. She wasn't her biggest fan, after all...

He let out a deep sigh, glad to get that off of his chest, but still hurt from remembering that night. He wondered how Kali was taking all of this. He hoped she wouldn't be pissed at him for it, but she probably would, he thought. He continued, "I was stupid for not telling you before. Made me look more suspicious of those rumors, right?"

She looked at him and answered, "Yeah."

He scoffed and looked away from her for a second. "I figured." He got on his feet and continued digging through the junk. "If you want to

break up with me, you can." He looked sad when he said that. "I'm an idiot and a pretty shitty boyfriend. Pretty valid reasons to break up, right?"

She gave him a shocked look. Why would he suggest something like that? It wasn't like she was perfect either. Plus, he DID drive her back home, like a good boyfriend would do. She stood up, smiled, and said, "You are an idiot, Steve Harrington." He nodded a little before she wrapped her arm around his shoulder, surprising him a little and making him stop what he was doing. "But you're my idiot." He looked at her in surprise when she said that, grinning just a little. "Besides, I'm not the perfect girlfriend either. I left without telling you and got you all worried. Plus, there's all that stuff last year." She chuckled at that, making him chuckle as well and grin wider.

"I guess that's fair," he replied. "So, I'm your idiot, huh?"

She nodded, grinning back at him. "My one and only."

Their faces were close to each other, him stating, "I can live with that." They then shared a kiss, solidifying that they weren't going to leave each other anytime soon.

...

The police chief carried Will, who was wrapped up in a blanket, out to the driveway with Jonathan, Joyce, and Terry. "You take Denfield and when you see a large oak tree..." the dirty-blonde-haired woman said to the Byers. "Swing a right and you'll see a dead-end. From the look of your car, you can park there and it's a five-minute walk. You'll see it."

Jonathan opened a door of his car to let the police chief put Will inside. "O-okay, Denfield to oak tree...swing a right. That's it?"

"Yes."

"It's channel ten, right?"

"Yes, it's channel ten," Hopper said as he got out of the car and Jonathan closed the door. He put a hand on his shoulder. "Listen, you let us know when that thing's outta him, right?" He just nodded,

leading him to pat him on the back and go back inside with Terry. She looked back at her friend, giving her a worried look. Joyce gave her a reassured one, making her smile. She hoped to Christ that Will was going to be okay, Joyce and Jonathan will definitely make sure of it.

Meanwhile, she and Hopper will accompany Michael to the Lab. Terry will be there for directions while Hopper will be defending her and the telekinetic boy. Terry will also be armed in case those monsters came in more ways than one. This would leave Jane alone...but she knew who to trust with her and the rest of the kids.

...

Back in the house, Kali was ready to leave with Jonathan and the heaters brought to the car, but talked to her boyfriend before going out there. "You're fine with me going with Jonathan, right?" she asked him.

He nodded. "Yeah, you're his friend, aren't you? Friends go and support each other." She smiled at him and caressed his cheek.

"You may not be the perfect boyfriend, Steve, but from what you've told me, you're a damn good babysitter." Her hand then travelled down onto his shoulder.

He laughed a little. "Am I?"

She got her hand off of his shoulder. "You saved Jane's friends from those Demo-dog-things with your bat. I haven't seen any babysitters willing to do that."

He laughed again. "You're right." He held her hand and gently squeezed it. "Don't worry. I'll make sure Jane and the rest of the little shits are safe."

"Thanks." They then shared a quick kiss before she left.

...

Outside, Kali hugged Jane, who was near Mike, and said, "I'll see you later. Don't treat Steve like shit, okay?"

She chuckled a little and nodded. "Sure, Kali. Don't die."

She scoffed. "Wasn't planning too." She then left, leaving her with the dark-haired boy now.

They looked into each other's eyes, the tomboy holding his hands and very worried. "Just be careful, okay?" she said, her eyes becoming watery at the thought of what she was going to say next. "I don't wanna lose you again, Mike."

He shook his head, his eyes watery as well, and told her, "You're not going to lose me, Jane."

She blinked, a tear going down her cheek. "Do you promise?"

He nodded, giving her a bit of a reassuring smile. "I promise." She smiled back at him as they both leaned towards each other...about to kiss.

Suddenly, Hopper and Terry, who now had a pistol Hopper found near the shed in her back pocket, spotted what they were going to do, their parental instincts kicking in. "Hey," they both called out to the both of them. They got away from each other and looked back at them. Terry walked over to them and said, "Come on, Mike. It's time to go."

"Yeah, buddy, we don't have all night," Hopper added as he got into his car.

They both sighed and looked at each other again. "You're also going to make sure Mama will be safe, right?"

He nodded at her again. "Yes." They both smiled at each other once more as the girl let go of his hands. Terry got to them, hugging her daughter tight as she returned it.

"I'll miss you, sweetheart," she whispered to her. "Please be safe."

"You too, Mama," she whispered back as they released the hug. Her mom gave her a reassuring look as she made Mike go to Hopper's car with her.

As he got into the car, Terry went to Kali and they both hugged each other. "Be safe, sweetheart."

"You too, Mum." They broke it off, giving each other reassuring looks as they got into their respective vehicles. And just like that, both of the cars drove away.

Mike couldn't help but look back as he, Hopper, and Terry were driving off. Jane looked so worried about him and his mom, Kali too, probably. He will keep his promises to her, no matter what. He will be careful, he will make sure Terry is safe. He will also make sure that Hopper is safe and that he'll close the gate, once and for all.

---

**Happy belated 2019, folks! How was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**This took a bit because I began having second thoughts on how this entire chapter should go because I've been WAITING to write this one! Where everything comes to an emotional high! Now this chapter is how it is!**

**So...there's the case of Mike throwing Will at the school. Of course Jane would be angry at him, but we all know she wouldn't angry at him for long and that he's learned that what he did was wrong, so now they're both really happy to see each other again.**

**Aaaaaand then there's Hopper and Terry taking care of Mike coming up to surface. I made Jane a helluva lot more mad because, well, her MOM and the police chief, people she thought she could trust, kept that a secret. It's a LOT more intense. Poor Jane...poor Hopper too, since Terry said there was nothing between them and poor Terry for making her daughter mad and distraught like this...**

**Of course Mike is going to shake hands with Max and see her as another friend. She wasn't the one he threw...**

**Yeaaaaaah, no MILFs answering the door for Billy in this AU. I mean, I'll-as a matter of fact, we'll have to see if that scene with**

him and Karen get to someplace in Season 3.

I hope I didn't make that moment when Steve tells Kali what happened too cheesy. I began loving them together more and more as I write this entire fanfic, so...yeah. They're still gonna be together~!

Yeah, Terry's gonna go with Hopper and Mike to close the gate, just for directions and some extra protection (and maybe something else). I hope you guys don't mind that!

Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

P.S.: Before any of you ask, OF COURSE I'm gonna write M11 Season 3! I'm sure it's a given at this point. We'll have to wait 'til the 4th of July though AND I'll have to plan what changes I'll have to make when I see it in its entirety. But yeah, I'll write Season 3 around when it comes out! Who's pumped to see it though? I know I am! Since I'm American who celebrates the 4th of July, this'll add to the fun! :D

## 50. Let's Get The Hell Out of Here

**Wow, fifty chapters in...anyways, here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

During the drive to the Lab, Terry, Hopper, and Mike were silent. Hopper was driving, Mike was in the passenger's seat, and Terry sat in-between them. The boy was looking out, all of them feeling the tension in the air. Not just from what hell they're going to get themselves into again...but also some unspoken words.

"So, we're not gonna talk about it, huh?" Hopper suddenly asked. Both Terry and Mike looked at him.

"What?" the dark-haired boy asked.

"Oh, I dunno, why you look like some punk on MTV."

Terry scoffed and looked at Mike. "I've been wondering about that too," she added. "I know we don't have that kind of clothing in your closet." The boy just sighed and looked out the window. She frowned and placed a hand on his shoulder. "Hey, I'm not mad at you."

"Neither am I, bud," Hopper added, looking at him for a second. "We just wanna know where you've been, okay?"

He guessed that seemed fair. After all, they were also the reason he came back. He looked at the two of them and replied, "I went to see Mom." The two adults' blood ran cold by that, their eyes widening as they looked away from him. How did he...?

"Okay..." the man finally said to break the silence, glancing at Mike. "How'd you get there?"

He looked straight into his eyes. "A truck."

"A truck?" they both asked, looking concerned.

He nodded. "A big truck."

They were both silent at the moment, trying to process that. "Whose



truck was it?" Terry asked.

"A man's."

Both looked even more concerned. "A man's?"

"He was a nice man." Now they had to piece together what he's just told them...

"Okay, so let me get this straight." Hopper looked at Mike again. "A nice man with a big truck drove you to your Mom's?" He nodded, making him look down the road again. "Okay, then what?" He didn't answer, worrying the two of them.

"What happened, Michael?" He still didn't answer.

"What? Your Aunt Giana gave you those clothes and hair?" The police chief's voice was dripping with sarcasm.

He took a deep breath, wondering if he should tell them about Nancy as well. They didn't really take the fact that he had a stranger drive to his mother's home, so he decided to not tell them right now. "I..." He looked at them solemnly. "I shouldn't have left." Silence roamed around the vehicle for a moment, the two adults collecting on how they should reply to that. Really, before they ended up in one of those tunnels, they parted from him on a bad note. To be honest...it wasn't his fault.

Hopper was the first to reply, shaking his head. "No...no, bud, it's not your fault," he said.

Terry was glad he was thinking what she was thinking. "We should've been there," she added, placing a hand on his shoulder again. She sighed and shook her head. "I should've said that your mom's not functioning right instead of being gone." With that, she removed her hand from his shoulder. The boy frowned, his eyes getting watery like hers was beginning to.

The man nodded. "Yeah...we shouldn't have lied to you like that."

"About your mom..."

"And when you can leave." Now Hopper's eyes were getting watery as well. "Lot of things we both shouldn't have done." He shook his head again, looking distressed. "Especially me, since Terry isn't always around." They both looked at him, seeing that he was ready to burst into tears at any moment. "Sometimes, I feel like..." He sharply inhaled. "Like I'm this black hole or something."

The woman frowned, looking like she was going to cry too. "I feel that way sometimes too," she replied. "Especially now."

The boy looked saddened to see them like this, about to cry as well, but he had to ask. "What's a black hole?"

Terry sniffed and answered, "It's this...thing from outer space. It sucks everything towards it and...destroys it." A tear came out of her eye and she wiped it away. Mike was sad to hear that they both felt like they were destroying everything.

Hopper sighed, leaning back on his seat and sniffing. "Yeah...Sara had a picture about space. She loved it." She was surprised that he brought her up.

A tear rolling down his cheek, Mike asked, "Sara?" The man remembered that he didn't tell him about her, the two's eyes meeting each other. "Who is Sara?"

He took a deep breath and answered somberly, "Sara...Sara's my little girl." He looked towards the road once more. "She's my little girl." Little girl...

"Is she..."

He nodded before he could finish his sentence. "My daughter." Just thinking about her made a couple of tears roll down Hopper's cheeks.

"Wh-where is she?"

He sniffled once again, wiping his tears away. "Well, here's the thing, kid. Unlike your mom, she's actually, uh..."

Mike figured what he was going to say, making him feel really bad for him. "Gone." He didn't even say that as a question, only a

statement because it seemed that way.

Hopper looked at him once again, drawing his lips to a thin line and looking back at the road. "Yeah...gone. The black hole got her." Terry rubbed his arm to comfort him, a couple tears running down her cheeks as well. Mike looked ahead, feeling absolutely awful that Hopper lost his daughter like that. Nancy had said something similar about Holly. "And...somehow...I've just been scared, y'know?" He sniffled again. "I've been scared that it'll take you too." The freckled boy glanced at him. "I'm sure Terry does too."

She nodded, turning her head towards the telekinetic boy. "Yeah...I...I almost lost my daughter to that bastard last year." He knew exactly what she was talking about, when the doctor had one of the soldiers drag Jane to him for experiments. "It was her or you and me and I..." She sniffled, crying again. "I would never forgive myself if I lost her. I would never forgive myself if I lost you."

"Me too. That's why we get..." He shook his head, trying to hold back more tears. "...so mad."

"So unreasonable..." Now they both cried, making Mike cry as well. "We can be so...so-"

"Stupid?" the boy finished for her.

They both chuckled at that, sounding like the best descriptor. "Yeah...stupid."

"Really stupid," Hopper added, him and Terry smiling sadly.

Mike smiled sadly as well, reaching and holding one of their hands. He held them tight as they did as well. They both looked at him as he replied, "I've been stupid too." Not only in running away twice, but also what he did to Will back at the school. Still...

Hopper's sad smile turned into a grin. "I guess we all broke our rule." Now the two others grinned.

"We did, didn't we?" Terry sniffled and wiped away her tears. "Nobody's perfect." To that, both of the males agreed. She moved her hand that was laced with Mike's, getting his attention. "By the way, I

actually like your new look. You're rocking it." He chuckled and smiled at that compliment.

The man smiled again and looked at him. "Yeah, kid. You look like a badass." Just for this moment, Terry let the fact that Jim swore in front of the boy slide.

He knew he did and he was happy they both liked it. "Bitchin'."

While Terry looked shocked that the boy himself swore like that, Hopper chuckled again. "Sure, buddy. Bitchin'."

She decided to just play along and hug the boy. "Is that what you kids say for 'awesome' nowadays? I better not catch you teaching Jane that." Mike chuckled once again and hugged Terry as best as he could. They were all glad they were on good terms again. They all cared for each other very much and it would hurt them all to be bitter to one another again. Plus, bitterness wouldn't do them well when they reach to the Lab.

---

While Steve was reluctantly helping Dustin stuff the dead Demo-dog into the refrigerator, Lucas and Max were sweeping up the broken glass while Jane was pacing around, worrying about the rest of her family and Mike. It was clear to see on her face. The African-American boy sighed and said, "Jane, you can stop pacing now."

She did, but glared daggers at Lucas. "Oh, I'm sorry for worrying about Mike and Mama going to dangerous place SWARMING with those dogs!" she replied, frustrated.

"Demo-dogs!" Dustin corrected her from the kitchen.

"Listen, the chief will protect them," Lucas rebutted.

"Mike also has his powers, so..." Max added, shrugging a little. Sure, he does, but there was a limit...

Steve entered into the room, rubbing his hands with a kitchen cloth. "Okay, listen, a coach calls a play in the game," he began. "The bottom line is that you execute it, alright?"

She crossed her arms and rolled her eyes at him. "This isn't some stupid sports game, Steve. Also, we're not even in the game, we're on the bench." So that's why Kali says that Jane can be a bit of a bitch sometimes...

"Well, my point is..." He paused, the kids waiting for him to say something significant. He then just said, "Yeah, we're on the bench, so, uh, there's nothing we can do." The tomboy huffed, but Dustin's eyes twinkled in realization.

"That's not ENTIRELY true..." he said, everyone looking at him. "I mean, these Demo-dogs have a hive-mind, right?" He looked at Steve. "When they ran away from the bus, that's because they were called away."

The kids began to realize where Dustin was going with this. Lucas pointed at him. "So, if we get their attention..."

"We can draw them from the Lab..." Max added.

"So we can clear a path to the gate," Jane finished.

Steve scoffed. "Right, then we ALL DIE!" He spread his arms out.

The curly-haired boy raised his eyebrows. "Well, that's ONE point of view."

He shook his head at him. "That's not a point of view, man. That's a fact." This made Jane think of something, her gasping.

"Wait, I got it!" She walked towards the kitchen, the rest of the group following. They all got to the X as she pointed at it. "This is where Chief and Mama dug their hole, making this the only way to get to the tunnel. So..." She stood up and walked to another area. She stopped at the big blue spot in the living room, spreading her arms out to it. "This is like a hub, all the tunnels feed into here." She got on her knees and placed her hands on it, looking up at everyone else. "We can set this on fire."

Aaaaand that's why Kali says that Jane can be crazy. "Oh yeah, that's a NO." He pointed down at it.

The kids ignored him, however. "The mind flayer will call away his army..." Dustin stated.

"And they'd ALL come to stop us!" Lucas added enthusiastically.

"Hey..."

"Then we circle back to the exit," Jane suggested.

"Guys-"

"By the time we'll be gone..."

"Mike'll be at the gate," Max said.

Steve couldn't take it anymore, so he clapped his hands loud and shouted, "HEY, HEY, HEY!" They all looked at him, his face serious. "You guys aren't doing this." He moved his finger to the hub. "This isn't happening."

Jane looked upset at his reaction. "But-"

"No, no, no, no, no! No 'buts'! I promised to keep all you shitheads safe, especially YOU, Jane-" She rolled her eyes at him again, clenching her fists. "-and that's why what I plan on doing! We're all staying here, on the bench and waiting for the starting team to do their job!" The kids looked at him, disapproving and annoyed by his behavior. "Do you guys understand?"

"This isn't a stupid sports game, asshole," the curly-haired girl replied to him biting.

He didn't flinch or hold back, looking at her dead in the eye and asking, "I said, do you guys understand?!" None of them responded since they wanted to do this, especially Jane, but Steve was preventing them. Even though he's changed, he was still an asshole-

Every single one of them heard a car rev its engine, all of their thoughts coming to a halt. Max was the first to go to the living room since she recognized that sound, then Lucas. They both looked out the window, the red-haired girl stating in shock, "It's my brother." She backed away from the window, shaking her head as her voice was

faltering. "H-he can't know I'm here. He'll kill me." He looked at Lucas, then everyone else. "He'll kill US." That sent shivers down the kids' spines, including Steve's. However, because he was their babysitter, he wasn't going to let this piece of shit lay a finger on any of them, no matter what it takes.

...

He got outside after he told those little shits to hide themselves. He placed his hands on his waist, taking a deep breath and looking as cool and confident as he could. He needed to look like he'll not run away from this jackass. When the car stopped, the driver came out...revealing to be Billy in some sort of dating outfit. He smoked his cigarette before grinning at the sight of him. "Well, well, I didn't expect to see part of the circus here," he said in a teasing voice.

Steve scoffed at that. "Yeah, I'm here, don't cream your pants," he replied plainly. Billy removed his jacket before the two walked towards each other, stopping at a good distance.

...

As they were talking, the kids couldn't help but peek over to see what was going on. To Dustin and Jane, Billy did look quite intimidating for a teenager. He looked like the asshole that almost ran them over on Halloween. Hopefully, Steve will drive him away and they wouldn't have to deal with him.

There was tension in the air as they got closer, Dustin whispering, "This is mental..." Max shushed him before they both looked at the window. The kids were quick to get out of sight really quick and hide on the couch. "Shit! Did he see us?!" They all sincerely hoped he didn't. Then they heard Steve getting shoved. He definitely knew.

They all got away from the window, Jane saying, "Let's get to the backyard." They all nodded as they were about to follow her there...

Then the door swung open, revealing the mullet-wearing teen himself. He took a drag of his cigarette, then had his eyes focused on Lucas. "If it isn't Lucas Sinclair..." he muttered as he slammed the door shut behind him and stormed to him and Max. He was so close,

all of the kids felt like running...but they didn't. He looked at his stepsister and said, "I thought I told you to stay away from him, Max."

"G-go away, Billy," she stammered out, trying not to look scared in front of him.

"You disobeyed me, Max...and you know what happens when you disobey me."

Her fear, as well as everyone else's, was increasing by the second. "Billy-"

"I break things." In a mere second, he roughly grabbed Lucas and shoved him against a bookcase. The kids were yelling Lucas's name and at Billy to stop. They could see that he was struggling, but Billy kept him pinned and whispered things to him. All of them felt very tense as he then yelled, "STAY away from her, you understand?!" Jane knew Lucas was trying to hang out with Max, but damn...

"I SAID GET OFF ME!" the black-haired boy yelled as he kned him at the groin. He screamed and let go of him, staggering back and holding his crotch a little. He sharply glared at Lucas as the other kids heard the door open, Steve coming inside. All of them gestured him to get Billy before he did anything more to Lucas, him nodding and storming up to him.

"You are so dead, Sinclair! So dead!" Steve grabbed his arm and made him turn to him, shaking his head.

"No, you are." He then threw a punch to his face, the kids' jaws dropping. The blonde-haired guy staggered back, but began laughing. As he was distracted, Lucas joined up with the rest of the group again, getting hugged by them.

He wagged his finger at the jock, his nose bleeding from the punch. "I wondered where the hell's that fire in you!" He spread his arms out. "I was waiting for this KING STEVE everyone's been talking about. Glad to see you break out of your circus life-" He got closer, but Steve pushed him away.



"Get out," he said to him coldly.

He didn't say anything for a few seconds, then threw a punch to him. He dodged it and gave him another punch at the face. This made the kids cheer on Steve. "YEAH, KICK HIS ASS, STEVE!" Dustin yelled out as he gave Billy another punch to the face. He was still laughing, staggering back on the sink. Steve punched him again, now having him backed up against the other sink.

"GET HIM! GET HIM!" Jane yelled.

"NOW! NOW!" Dustin also yelled.

"GET THAT SHITHEAD!" Lucas shouted.

Billy was still laughing like a psychopath, despite his face getting a bit more bloody. Steve was going to then finish the job, but he didn't see the plate Billy had in his hand. He crashed it against the side of his head, leaving him in pained daze as he staggered back.

"BILLY!" Max exclaimed, the kids looking shocked at what happened.

"STEVE!" the rest of the kids cried out.

"Oh my God..." Jane muttered before Billy stormed to him. The kids got back as Billy now threw a punch at Steve, making him stagger against another bookcase before another punch got him to the living room.

He roughly grabbed him and said to him bitingly, "No one gets to tell me what to do." He head-butted him to the ground, making him release a cry of pain. He wandered over to him. "WHOOO! GET UP!" The kids were yelling at Steve to get up and kick his ass, but he got on top of him and punched him in the face continuously. The kids were aghast, but still cheered on their babysitter to get up and fight him. His face was getting bloody, their worries skyrocketing like crazy.

Then, in what felt like a second, Max grabbed the needle used to knock out Will, uncased it, stormed to her stepbrother, and shoved it right into his neck, injecting the fluid into him. The kids stopped yelling and Billy stopped punching. The red-haired girl backed away

from him as he stood up and looked at her and the kids...his vision becoming hazy. He grabbed the needle and slowly got it out of his neck, dropping it to the ground. He walked towards his stepsister, though it was on a limp.

"Th-the hell is this...?" he stammered out, now feeling sleepy. "What'd you do...you little shit...? What'd you..." He then fell back, the kids tensing up at that. He seemed to stay down, chuckling. Max then grabbed Steve's bat and held it up, looking at him with daggers in her eyes.

"From here on out, you leave me and my friends alone, you hear?" she asked him in a cold voice.

With half-lidded eyes, he muttered out, "Screw you..." She swung the bat down to him, the kids tensing up before seeing that it hit just below his crotch. Even he knew that would be a helluva lot more painful than Steve's punches.

She got it up again and said, "Did you hear me, asshole?! You'll leave us ALL alone! Say it! SAY IT!" The kids thought that she was being a badass here, standing up against her own piece-of-shit stepbrother like this.

He licked his split lip and muttered, "I'll leave you guys alone..."

She scoffed. "What was that? I couldn't hear you."

"I'll leave you guys alone." And with that, he was finally unconscious. Jane, Lucas, and Dustin were relieved as well as Max, who dropped the bat and got Billy's car keys out of his pocket. She held them up for her new friends to see.

"Let's get the hell out of here." The kids were still processing that intense moment of badass-ness that she had. They all looked at each other, thinking about what they should do about Steve when they're going with the plan...

---

The conscious Byers and Kali arrived at the cabin, grabbing all the heaters they had into it. Jonathan had his little brother in his arms.

The dark-haired girl turned on the light, her and the Byers looking around. This seemed cozy, actually. She was surprised that her mom was involved in cleaning the cabin up for Mike. She shrugged. "Seems nice," she plainly stated, though they all knew it won't be for long.

Joyce found what was Hopper's bed and looked back at the teens. "We'll do it here," she told them.

...

They've removed all the sheets from the bed and laid Will on top of it. The teens tightly tied him up with rope while the woman put logs in the old-styled furnace. They set up all the heaters around him, looking to make sure it was all around him. Jonathan looked at his mother with a worried look and asked, "You sure this is going to work?"

She nodded, looking mad. "This monster has had Will long enough," she answered. "Let's kill that son of a bitch."

Just like that, Kali was given a box of matches, lighting a match up and throwing it into the furnace. The Byers turned on all the heaters to their high settings. They all took off their jackets since it'll become hot as hell in the cabin...hot enough for the Mind Flayer to get out of Will.

---

Hopper, Terry, and Mike finally arrived at the Lab premises, parking right in the middle of the parking lot. They all got out, Terry getting out at Mike's side. The freckled boy looked up at the building, feeling his blood run cold and his heart race from the sight of it. Never mind the Demo-dogs (that's what Dustin called them, right?), just looking at this place made him feel unnerved, his breathing becoming intense. He escaped from here...from all of that torment and neglect by two awful men.

Flashes of his time there ran through his head, from the cat he was supposed to kill hissing, to being carried away to that dark, cold room, to getting into the tank, to the walls cracking...to his screams.

Those flashes were gone when Hopper closed the trunk and had his

shotgun over his shoulder. He and Terry walked to him and stood by his side. They looked up at the building as well, the police chief cocking the shotgun. "Okay, I'll do the heavy-lifting up front," he said to Mike. "Terry'll be next to me. Save your strength until we're below, alright?" He didn't answer, still looking up at the building. They looked at him worriedly.

"Are you okay, Mike?" Terry asked, putting her hand on his shoulder once again.

He just nodded and walked on forward. She sighed as she and Hopper caught up with him. They saw the look on his eyes...he was thinking about his history with this place...and that he'll shut it down, once and for all.

Growls were heard before they all finally went inside a different door Terry led them to.

---

**And so it begins...how was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**I hope I wrote that closure scene with Mike, Terry, and Hopper in the car well. Emotions were running high in the canon scene, so they are in this one, with Terry involved.**

**Not much change with Mama Steve trying to protect the kiddos other than telling Jane he needed to protect her especially and Billy still calling him part of the circus. Hope you guys don't mind that.**

**Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

## 51. Close It

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

The kids have decided (most of them, reluctantly) to leave with the unconscious and bloody-faced Steve in Billy's car. They had what they needed before departing. Max was driving because she got some experience driving around a parking lot once. It was the best they could do. Lucas sat next to her, showing her the directions, while Dustin and Jane were at the back. The curly-haired boy held an ice to the teen's head, which had bandages where there were cuts, while the tomboy just carried the gallon of gasoline.

Steve began to stir, feeling like absolute hell due to the beating. His vision was fuzzy as he looked to his left, seeing Jane herself carry the gasoline. Since she was dimly-lit, he couldn't exactly tell it was her and not... "Kali...?" he muttered. She gave him a puzzled glance before his vision began clearing up. Then her look was of shock.

He closed his eyes and rubbed the bridge of his nose before Dustin whispered, "Hey, hey, don't touch it." His voice seemed to echo as the boy removed his hand from his nose. He looked to see the boy, seeing him smile. "Hey, buddy..." He then shushed him. "It's okay, ya put up a good fight." Did he...? "I mean, he kicked your ass, but you still put up a good fight." Okay, so he did get his ass handed to him by Billy.

Wait, where the hell was Billy? As a matter of fact...

"Okay, keep going straight for half a mile, then...make a left on Mount Sinai," Lucas told Max.

As if he wasn't hazy, now Steve was confused. He asked in a husky voice, "What's going on...?" The two kids at the front looked at him with wide eyes. When his mind became clear, he realized what was going on...

They were going through with their goddamn dangerous plan...and one of them was driving.

"Oh my God...!"

"Relax, she's driven before," Dustin said to him reassuringly.

Jane looked at the other tomboy and asked, "The parking lot you drove at was big, right?" Parking lot? That's how much experience-

"She can still drive," Lucas replied.

"Oh my God-" He tried to move, but Dustin tried to get him back down.

"The rest of them were going to leave you behind," he stated.

Jane gave him the stink-eye. "Yeah, because he could get in the way."

"Oh my-"

"I promised them that you'd stay cool." How could he stay cool in a situation like THIS?!

Without any warning, Max stepped on the gas and made the car go faster, Steve being very, very uncomfortable and worried about this situation. He held his hand up and exclaimed, "WHOA, WHOA, WHOA, WHOA! SLOW DOWN! STOP THE CAR!"

Jane groaned and glared at Dustin. "I told you he wouldn't be calm about this!"

"STOP THE CAR!"

Frustrated, Max yelled, "SHUT THE HELL UP! I'M TRYING TO FOCUS!"

Lucas looked down at the map he had and began to freak out, pointing at the road. "WAIT, TH-THAT'S MOUNT SINAI!"

She gave him a puzzled look. "What-"

"MAKE A LEFT! MAKE A LEFT!" Without any more hesitation, she did...at high speed...destroying a mailbox in progress. Everyone began screaming, Lucas screaming higher than them all.

---

Back in the cabin, it was completely hot, everyone in it sweating like crazy and their hair drenched in it. Kali leaned against the wall, Joyce was stand near one of the heaters, and Jonathan sat down behind one. The heat was enough to wake Will up, everyone tense by how he was going to react. He looked around, breathing heavily as he noticed all the sources of heat around him. He then struggled to get out of his ties.

"Wh-what's happening...?" he asked, no one answering. He struggled more. "It...it hurts." His voice sounded strained, then he began to thrash around in panic. "AH, IT HURTS! IT HURTS, IT HURTS!" He kept screaming that. Jonathan stood up, looking very worried and scared for his brother. Kali put her hand on his shoulder and squeezed it.

Joyce also looked worried and scared for her son, but that thing needed to get out of him...it was why Bob died and he was being like this. She proceeded to heighten the heat coming from the heaters as Will screamed, "LET ME GO! LET ME GO! IT HURTS!"

The auburn-haired teen began to cry, not taking the fact that his little brother was hurting and his mom was amplifying it well. "Mom-"

"NO!" she shouted, pushing one of the heaters closer to him.

Will thrashed around like crazy, screaming from the top of his lungs. Jonathan couldn't bear to look, so he turned away and covered his face. Kali hugged him, but he did not feel comforted. She didn't think she would be comforted in a situation like this either...

---

Finally, the kids have finally arrived at the farm, Max pressing the brakes hard when the large hole was in their sights. It was abrupt, throwing everyone back. "WHOA, HELLO!" Steve exclaimed.

Everyone caught their breaths, panting. "Whoa..." Dustin breathed out.

"That was actually great, Max," Jane told the redhead.

She smirked a little and said, "I told ya, Zoomer." The kids all

unbuckled and got out of the car, going to the trunk to get their things. Steve fell out and let out a small cry of pain. The kids were putting on cloths around their noses and mouths as masks and goggles as well. The teen groaned and leaned against the car, seeing them do this.

"Oh no, guys..." he groaned out. Jane grabbed the gasoline and a flashlight and walked towards the hole...right past Steve. He looked stern. "Hey! Where do you think you're going, Jane?!" She ignored him and looked down the hole with her flashlight.

She looked back at everyone else, pulled her mouth mask down, and told the kids, "There's already rope. It's just stuck on the ground." The other kids nodded in understanding.

"Let's grab the spare, just in case," Dustin suggested, Lucas nodded and grabbing the rope they already got.

Steve was peeved that no one was listening to him. "Uh, HELLO?! Are you guys deaf?! We are NOT going down there right now! I made myself CLEAR!" No one still responded to him, making him even more mad. "Hey, there is NO CHANCE we're going down that hole!" He stormed to the trunk. "This ends RIGHT NOW!" Thankfully, Dustin stopped him and began to talk to him about this situation. The kids, especially Jane, wondered when he would shut the hell up.

Lucas tied the rope they got onto the front of the car, then Jane got him the rope that was stuck there and gave it to him. He tied that up as well. Max had another gallon of gasoline and brought it down to the hole. Dustin was finishing up, "Now, I know you promised Kali to keep us all safe, especially Jane." He then grabbed Steve's bat and backpack. "So keep us safe." The teen thought there was no convincing them, stubborn little shits, so he gave in and grabbed that stuff.

...

With a shovel they got from the shed of the Byers' house, they managed to create the hole Hopper and Terry got through. Steve, wearing goggles and his mouth and nose mask, got down first, looking around with wide eyes. "Holy shit..." he muttered. The rest of



the kids got down too, looking around this place. So THIS was what the Upside Down looked like...

Jane shined her flashlight on a map they all created before departure and said, "Okay, I'm pretty sure this way." She gestured to the path in front of her.

"You're 'pretty sure' or you're certain?" Dustin asked.

She looked back at him. "I'm 100% sure, Dustin. Just follow me, okay?" She moved forward, but Steve grabbed her arm.

"Hey, hey, hey, I don't think so," he said, much to her annoyance. He could see her narrow her eyes at him, but he didn't let up. "If any of you little shits die down here, I'll get the blame. If I let YOU die, Jane, then it'll be worse. You got that?" She groaned as he swiped her flashlight from her. He flashed it towards the other kids. "Listen, from here on out, I'LL be leading the way, so come on." He moved on forward, the kids following suit. "Hustle, hustle!" Jane was completely annoyed by Steve right now, but if he wasn't going to stop their plan, then she'll let it slide.

---

Back in the Lab, Hopper, Terry, and Mike were there. They entered into a hallway, the adults pointing their guns both ways. Hopper's had a flashlight attached to it since things were getting dark. They all then walked to their right, approaching a side door that led to the stairs. "Here," Terry whispered to the both of them. The two adults got in there before the freckled boy did, him looking at this place once more with a sinking feeling. He then followed them inside.

They descended down the stairs before spotting...blood down the steps and on the rails. "Jesus Christ..." the woman muttered.

"Stay here, bud," Hopper said to Mike, gesturing Terry to come with him. She nodded and they both slowly walked down the steps. They looked at the other set of steps, looking surprised to see who was responsible for the blood. "Oh shit..." Terry had the same sentiment.

They both descended down those steps...getting to Dr. Owens, who had a bloody injury on his chest and his leg. He was breathing, so he

was alive, though it wouldn't be long since he was bleeding out. Hopper removed the shotgun from around his shoulder and Terry put her handgun in one of her back pockets. "Dr. Owens?" He looked up at the both of them, not replying.

They both looked at the injuries he got, Hopper asking, "Those sons of bitches got ya good, huh?" He opened his mouth to speak, but then he said, "Hey, it's okay, don't talk." He didn't as Hopper removed his belt to use as a bandage of his leg wound. "I gotcha, I gotcha." He looked behind them, shocked to see that Mike was there. They locked in eye contact.

They both looked back, neither of them surprised that he came down with them. They looked back at the doctor, the police chief saying, "Right, we've been meaning to tell you about him."

Terry used her hand to point to Mike. "This is Michael," she stated. "He was called either Michael Eleven or M11 here." She looked back at the boy, now gesturing between him and the doctor. "Michael, this is Dr. Owens." She then looked at the doctor. "He's the reason why I didn't die before finding you." He was a bit confused about what she said at first, but then realized that...well, his dad and Dr. Brenner could have had her killed for everything she had done last year. This man was the reason why the Lab didn't kill her, huh?

"He's been staying with me for about a year now," Hopper added. "Terry comes in during the night to make us dinner and keep us company. Now, he's gonna save all our asses." He looked at Dr. Owens straight in the eye, him doing the same. "Y'know, maybe when this is all said and done, maybe you can help him out like you helped Terry live, no? Maybe give him, I dunno, a normal life to lead. One where he isn't poked and prodded...not treated like a lab rat, y'know?" Terry loved the sound of that, wanting that for the boy too. The boy in question thought about that. A normal life...without any of that...it was what he wanted most.

Hopper gave Dr. Owens a wry smile. "Dunno, it's just a thought." With that, he tied his belt on the doctor's wounded leg tight, making him groan in pain.

"Think about it, will you?" Terry said to the doctor. "I appreciate the

compromise we made to let me live and you continue to work. You've saved my life." She tilted her head towards Mike. "Why not save his as well? He's going to save all of us, after all." They were pretty damn persistent, weren't they? However, it wasn't like he was a copy of Brenner or Wheeler. Plus, this kid...despite him not working at the facility prior to this year, he knew what he went through. It was tough...and completely inhumane.

He nodded at both of the adults, the woman standing up. Mike tried his best to hold back tears. He never thought someone like him would consider helping him. Hopper whispered to him, "Don't go anywhere." He gestured the two others to come along and they did, descending down the stairs more.

---

Steve and the kids continued moving through the tunnels, the kids looking around in shock. "God..." Lucas muttered.

"What IS this place?" Max asked. Jane kept thinking about the fact that her mom was stuck in this place with Hopper for nearly TWO days, at least. The fact that they all could be stuck down here haunted her mind, but they needed to go through with this-for her mom, for Mike, for Will.

"Come on, let's keep moving," Steve told them. They did...well, most of them. None of them noticed that Dustin had stopped and looked at what was on the ceiling...not until he started screaming.

Everyone froze up and turned back, hearing him yell, "HELP! HELP! HELP!" They all rushed towards his voice, seeing him run and trip over.

"DUSTIN!" the kids all exclaimed, out of sync.

"SHIIIT!"

Steve wasted no time getting near him. "What's going on?! What happened?!"

"IT'S IN MY MOUTH! SOME GOT IN MY MOUTH! SHIIIT!" He then coughed, pulling down his mouth mask to cough out more. When he

was done, he looked up at everyone, worried as hell about him, and stated, "I'm alright."

All of them were relieved, but annoyed. "You're kidding..." Jane muttered.

"Haha, very funny, man," Steve said to him in a dry, sarcastic tone. The curly-haired boy got up and put his mask back on, cuing for everyone to move on back forward. "Seriously..."

"Jesus, what an idiot," Max muttered, much to his dismay.

Despite that, he moved on forward with them. "Hold on, wait...wait." He caught up with them.

...

With Jane's map, Steve looked around at the place he stopped at right now with his flashlight. "Alright, Jane," he said. "Think we found your hub." Jane got next to him, everyone flashing their lights around. They all saw dead animal corpses and entrances to other tunnels. This WAS the hub, the place where her mom and Hopper were found.

Without any hesitation, she said, "Let's drench it."

...

With their respective tanks of gasoline, everyone spread out and either sprayed or poured the gasoline all over the place.

---

Will was still screaming and thrashing around in pain, making everyone in the room disheartened to see him like this. He was doing that for what felt like a long time, Jonathan's worry skyrocketing.

"I-it's not working," he muttered before turning to Joyce. "Mom, it's not working!"

"J-just wait!" she replied in distress.

His eyes began to tear up again. "How much longer?!" He pointed at

his little brother frantically. "L-look at him!"

"Jonathan, just wait-"

Now he looked like he was about to break down. "YOU'RE KILLING HIM!"

"JUST WAIT, GODDAMN IT!" He shook his head and put his hand on one of the ties to loosen it. Joyce managed to stop him before he did so. "NO, JONATHAN, DON'T DO IT!"

"MOM, YOU'RE *KILLING* HIM!" While they were yelling at each other, Kali noticed something dark appearing on his neck, making her breath hitch.

"Guys!" she yelled, though the both of them were still arguing. "GUYS! LOOK AT HIS NECK!" They stopped yelling, then seeing the veins of his neck turn black. It was coming out of him...

Suddenly, at a blink of an eye, Will managed to rip through one of the ties and tried to loosen the other one. Joyce was quick to try and stop him from doing that. However, she was met with his hand tightly wrapped around her neck...choking her. Both of the teens looked horrified at this.

---

Hopper, Terry, and Mike had finally reached to the bottom of the Lab, large spores flying everywhere. They were close to the testing room, but they all heard growling, making them keep their guards up. "Stay here, Mike," Terry told the boy before she and Hopper moved on forward. He began to breathe heavily, worrying about them a lot.

They both faced the entrance to the testing room, Hopper putting his flashlight away as they moved forward. They heard more growling, so there was no doubt in their minds that those...monsters were in there. "Get over there, Terry," the man whispered to her, pointing at the side of the entrance. She nodded and hid behind there, him hiding on the other side. He got out his pocket knife and used its reflection to see if any of those dogs were in there. There were, making him look distressed and stifle a sob. Terry did the same,

seeing his reaction. They had to get in there, but how the hell were they going to do it? It wasn't like they would die in one shot...damn it, Michael had to be in there...that poor, young little boy...shit.

Mike still looked worried about them, wondering about whether or not he should join them. They wanted him to stay back, but they were at the bottom...Hopper said they were fine with him using his powers down there, right...?

---

The group was all down dousing the entire place in gasoline, being in the tunnel they came out of before. Steve was in front of them, asking, "Right, you guys ready?"

"Ready," Jane, Lucas, and Max answered.

"Yeah," Dustin also answered. The teen got out a lighter as he added, "Light it up."

As he lit up the lighter, he muttered under his breath, "I'm in such deep shit." Not that these little shits weren't safe under his watch, but still...he was gonna do this.

---

Will continued choking Joyce while Jonathan tried to break out of his hold. None of them thought this was Will's strength that kept her in a chokehold...it was the Mind Flayer's.

Kali looked around frantically for a way to force the mind flayer to stop Will from choking his mother to death. She then spotted the fire poker near the fire in the fire place. Though it'll permanently scar Will, it was better than Joyce dying by his hand. She ran around the cot and grabbed it, Jonathan spotting her doing so. "K-Kali, what're you doing?!" he exclaimed. She didn't answer him and poked the hot part of the poker onto Will's side. He screeched and let Joyce go, the woman regaining her breath.

---

Hopper tried his best to suppress his saddened face and looked at Terry straight in the eye. He mouthed to her, "I'll go first." Her jaw dropped at that suggestion.

"No, Jim," she mouthed back. Without any reply from him, he stormed into the testing room, getting the attention of the Demo-dogs right outside it. She didn't want that man to go and have a high chance of being mauled by those things, so she got in with him.

---

"GET THE HELL OUT OF MY SON, YOU MONSTER!" Joyce yelled at the mind flayer as Kali put the fire poker back.

---

Steve threw the lighter at the hub and it quickly engulfed in flames. Everyone shielded their eyes from its complete brightness.

---

Will moved his head back and forth at an inhuman speed, everyone looking aghast at this.

---

As Terry got to Hopper's side, they both suddenly saw the Demo-dogs flinching and screeching in pain. They were both puzzled as to why they were doing this, lowering their guns. "What the hell...?" Hopper muttered.

---

All the vines were screeching and flailing around, burning to crisps. The group all stood up, Steve yelling, "Let's go! LET'S GO!" They began to run away from the flames before they could get caught in it.

---

Will stopped moving his head the way he did, his face full of black veins. His screaming was fading in and out.

---

"LET'S GO, LET'S GO!" Steve yelled at the kids again, all of them sprinting their way out of this place.

---

The two adults finally saw those things get into the hole...like they were called away to somewhere else.

---

Finally...after all this time, the black dust that had gotten into Will

during that day on the school field began exiting out through his mouth. Everyone got back, looking shocked as all hell as they saw the amount that was coming out of him. It then moved out the cabin at the pace of lightning. Kali ran out and saw that the dust was reaching up to the sky. "That's right, go, you son of a bitch," she muttered under her breath.

She got back inside, all of the heaters turned off now. Jonathan and Joyce untied his other wrist and his ankles. Everyone looked at him, the boy looking completely normal now, but unconscious. The woman was crying, her and her oldest son trying to wake the boy up. He then opened his eyes, much to everyone's relief. The Byers were overjoyed to see him awake, then he looked at Joyce and said, "...Mom?" Now her tears and Jonathan's were of joy.

"Oh, Will..." Joyce squeaked out before pulling him into a hug. He hugged back, Jonathan joining in too. Kali couldn't help but smile and join in as well. It was a relief that he was alright. Now, if Jane and her mom were alright as well...

---

Mike walked into the testing room, looking just as shocked as the two adults were that there were no Demo-dogs anymore. The three looked at each other, trying to process this, then Hopper's walkie-talkie began to whirl. "*Chief?*" Jonathan's voice asked through the crackles. "*Are you there? Do you copy?*"

He pulled it out, pressed the talk button, and answered, "Yeah, I copy."

"*Close it.*" It was over with, then? That was a goddamn relief.

Before Hopper could put his walkie-talkie away, they all heard Kali's voice now, saying, "*Wait, I need to know my mum's alright. Is she there?*" He looked at Terry, who gestured him to hand over the walkie-talkie. He did.

She pressed the talk button and answered, "I'm here, sweetheart. I'm alright."

---



Kali let out a sigh of relief. She looked overjoyed to hear her mother's voice and that she was alright, her eyes getting teary. The Byers was also relieved to hear she was alright, especially Joyce. *"Are you okay, Kali?"* she asked.

She nodded and answered, "Y-yes, Mum."

---

She smiled, her eyes getting teary from hearing her adopted daughter's voice. "Get back to the Byers' home safely, alright?"

*"You got it, Mum."* She was going to hand back the walkie-talkie to Hopper, then she heard her say, *"Get back here safely too, when Mike closes the gate, okay?"*

She swore she could cry right now. She answered into it, "I will, Kali. I promise."

*"Thank you, Mum."* She finally handed the walkie-talkie back to Hopper and regained her composure. They all looked at the hole right across from them, ready to close it, once and for all.

...

They were all in the pulley weight, it going down as the red light of the hole shined on them. Mike was baffled to see how big it really was compared to before, but he couldn't back down now. Still, its size was intimidating. He held the adults' hands with his. The two squeezed his hands to allieviate his complete anxiety over this...and their own as well.

---

Steve and the kids continued running, the teen looking down at the map with his flashlight to make sure he didn't get them all lost. "Alright, this way!" he shouted to them. They all ran, but then Jane tripped and fell, letting out a cry. She sat up to see one of her legs wrapped by one of the vines. She tried to get out of the its grip, but it was too tight. "HELP! ONE OF THE VINES GOT ME!" she yelled to the others. "HEEEEEELP!"

---

Hopper pressed a button on the pulley to make it stop, the three still holding hands. He and Terry looked down at the boy, who kept his eyes on the glowing red hole. He looked at the both of them, giving them a look that said that he was ready. They both nodded and the three let go of their hands. The two adults were still worried about the boy, since this was a grand task for him to complete. He was like a son to them. However, they'll make sure he completes closing the hole.

Mike looked straight at the hole again, hearing a low, loud growl. He couldn't let that intimidate him as he took a deep breath. He tilted his head down and raised his hand up, using all of his power to close it. His hand was shaking due to the amount of power he was using, but he still kept going. The hole glowed some more, another growl heard. The boy still kept going, his nose starting to bleed.

Suddenly, they could all see a grand shadow appear in the hole. They all felt their goosebumps raise from the sight of it-hell, Terry and Hopper felt themselves shiver from looking at it. They all came to the conclusion that right there, what was in that hole...

Was no other than what the kids called the Mind Flayer.

---

**Stopping right here. What do you guys think? This is a pretty action-packed chapter. Are there any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**Oh man...the next chapter will be the final one for the season! I know it's going to be a pretty long one, if you guys don't mind that. It must sound pretty sad that I would be emotional over what I wrote, but...yeah, I'm going to get emotional writing the final chapter for this season. I mean, no matter how much I watch it, the Season 2 finale of Stranger Things will always get me emotional, so...yeah. I got free time over the weekend, so maybe I'll have it all done by Sunday. :)**

**Keep on supporting this fanfic like you guys do and I'll see you in the finale of M11 Season 2! :D**

## 52. Tonight is a Special Night

Here it is...the final chapter. Sorry that I didn't upload on Sunday when I promised. Nothing but a pretty long chapter, high emotions, and a good finale here. Enjoy!

---

Steve was quick to stop in his tracks, turn around, and bolt straight to where Jane was screaming. The other kids did the same. "HEEEELP! HELP!" she kept screaming, still trying to kick the vine off of her leg.

"Hold on, Jane!" the teen said, running to the vine. The other kids held her and tried to pull her out. Everyone was clamoring before Steve swung his bat down at the vine three times. It screeched as it broke in half, the grip on the tomboy's leg gone. Everyone hoisted her back on her feet, asking her if she was alright. Her breath was shaky, making her not answer at the moment.

"Okay, we need to GO!" Steve said before they heard a loud roar not too far from them. They all tensed up, Steve holding his bat up to beat the shit out of whatever the hell roared. They all saw a Demo-dog right before them, growling. Steve wanted to attack it and most of the kids wanted to bolt away, but Dustin was...composed for some reason.

"Dart?" he asked, confusing the hell out of everyone. If that thing was Dart...shit, he's GROWN.

He moved on forward, but everyone was telling him to stop. He gave them the hand and shushed them. "You guys gotta trust me, please." They all fell silent, still feeling tense as he and Dart began approaching each other. The curly-haired boy removed his goggles and mouth mask, whispering to him, "It's me, Dustin. Ya remember?" He crouched down the the yellow-legged Demo-dog. "Will you let us pass?" It roared, causing everyone but him, surprisingly, to freak out and get back.

He continued whispering to him, everyone else thinking that he was crazy. He then took off his backpack, Jane whispering, "What the hell is he doing?"

"He's insane..." Lucas replied. Steve and Max quietly shushed them both.

Dustin got out a 3 Musketeers bar and opened it up, Dart inching much closer to him. He set it on the ground and Dart...bent down and began to eat it. How the hell this was working was beyond everyone else's knowledge. He then gestured the rest of the group to move past him, Max taking initiative first before everyone else. They all managed to sneak right past the dog-sized monster without getting his attention.

Dustin gave him one last piece of 3 Musketeers before standing up and joining up with them. They all saw him look back and say, "Goodbye, buddy." They all knew he liked Dart very much, so...it was like Old Yeller. They all moved forward, leaving the yellow-legged Demo-dog behind to eat his nougat...and die when Mike was done.

---

Mike continued to use his power to close the gate, clenching his teeth as his hand began to shake more. However, it wasn't closing one bit, maybe because the Mind Flayer was preventing it. He needed more than he was giving...and he knew how to get that much. He closed his eyes and remembered something way back earlier in the afternoon...

---

*"Find something from your life, something that angers you...a lot," Nancy told him. "Channel it."*

---

Just seeing her again after what she's done to him a few hours before was enough to anger him, but he knew that wasn't enough...

---

*"DOCTOR, PLEASE! PLEASE!" he cried out to Brenner as he was being carried out by a couple of workers. Then his father appeared, looking apathetic about his own son's suffering as he usually did. "DAD! DAD! HELP! HELP ME!" And before he knew it, he was thrown into the dark room and was locked in there.*

---

That would never stop to piss him off.

He opened his eyes and used more of his power to close the gate. The sides finally began to start closing in, making sizzle sounds as they moved. Both of the adults were beyond shocked to see him actually doing it. The Mind Flayer growled once again.

---

The group continued running, then all of a sudden, the tunnels began to shake like there was an earthquake. That threw everyone off-balance, making them all cry out and scream. They then heard growling as they stood up. "Wh-what was that?" Max asked, her voice panicky. They heard another growl, all of them turning back with aghast faces behind their masks and goggles.

"They're coming..." Jane muttered before yelling, "Shit, they're coming!" They all began to bolt right out of there.

"MOVE, MOVE, MOVE!" Steve yelled at all of them.

"COME ON, JANE!" Lucas shouted to the curly-haired girl.

"OH MY GOD, OH MY GOD!" Dustin cried out.

Before they knew it, they finally spotted the rope through the hole, skidding to a halt. Lucas pointed at it and shouted, "THERE, THERE!" The Demo-dogs released another growl.

"COME ON, LET'S GO!" Jane yelled, everyone scrambling to the spot.

"GOGOGOGOGOGO! COME ON, COME ON!" Steve also yelled before stopping at the rope. He hoisted Max up first, the redhead using the rope to get right back up to ground. The kids kept clamoring both him and her to hurry up. When she was on the ground, Steve hoisted Lucas up to the rope, then Jane. Both of them got up successfully thanks to Max helping them out.

They all removed their mouth masks and goggles, looking down at Steve and Dustin. The growling was damn loud now and they were just frozen there. Jane and Lucas offered Dustin their hands, both yelling, "DUSTIN, COME ON!" He screamed and looked away, bracing for his upcoming death...then the unthinkable happened.

The horde of Demo-dogs ran right past him and Steve like they weren't there...like they were invisible. This shocked the hell out of everyone that saw this. Steve pulled Dustin close to him as they all cleared out. Everyone was just completely baffled by this...then it hit Jane.

"Michael," she said in a breathy voice.

---

The freckled boy kept his eyes fixed on the gate as it began to close more and more. He was heavily breathing because of the amount of power he was using. Suddenly, Terry and Hopper both heard screeching, making them look back and ready their weapons. They knew it was too much to hope that those things would never return. Hopper used his flashlight to aim and they both pointed at the same directions.

The pulley suddenly bounce, making both the adults scream as they turned and saw a Demo-dog looking at them from the top. Mike was still focused on the gate. Hopper quickly positioned himself and shot at the Demo-dog, it screaming and getting off of it. He and Terry looked down to see if it was gone, then another jumped up and grabbed onto the other side of the pulley. Terry turned first before Hopper and shot at it a few times, getting it off of the pulley.

She and the police chief faced the wall...seeing it crawling with Demo-dogs. They both looked aghast, the man exclaiming, "Oh SHIT!" He then shot six of them down before he was out of ammo. "Shit!"

"Give me the flashlight," the woman said to him. He did while he went to get his assault rifle from behind him. Three shots each seemed enough to take down four of those things. However, now she was the one out of ammo. "Here." She gave Hopper the flashlight as he now used his rifle to shoot those things down. Hopper had given her spare handgun ammo, so she reached into her pocket to get those.

While that was going on, Mike continued to close the gate, despite the noise of the guns and the Demo-dogs. His nose was bleeding as well as his ears and his eyes showed the strain it took to use his

power. His breathing became heavier and it hurt like hell to continue doing this. But he was willing to go through with it if it meant closing this, once and for all. Then flashbacks appeared in his mind...

---

*"You have a terrible wound, Michael," Fake Ted told him earlier in the night.*

---

*He saw the doctors giving his mom a C-section and pull him out, revealing their faces afterwards.*

---

He clenched his teeth tight.

---

*"...a terrible, festering wound."*

---

*He poked the Demogorgon's back in that darkness and it turned and screamed at him.*

---

*When he was screaming, the wall broke, forming the hole that was the current gate.*

---

*Lying on the ground with a bloody nose and crying, he said to Jane, "The gate...I opened it..."*

---

The Mind Flayer began to poke one of its tendrils out. He knew it was going to stop him, so he had to pick up the pace.

---

*"This rot that will grow..." both Fake Ted and Fake Brenner said in-sync, crouching down to him.*

---

*He remembered walking right up to the Demogorgon to kill it, to stop it from hurting those he cared about most.*

---

*"I'm the monster..." he also said to Jane.*

---

*It was getting more and more closer to him.*

---

*"...and spread..."*

---

*He remembered his mom getting carried out and struggling to break free, crying out, "No, NO! LET ME GO! LET ME GO!"*

---

*Just like all the times he's been carried to the dark room every time Brenner and his dad were disappointed in him. He turned to them with teary eyes and shouted, "DOCTOR! DAD! PLEASE!"*

---

*His mom had gotten her brains scrambled with the shock therapy.*

---

*When that Demogorgon screeched at him like that, he screamed from the top of his lungs.*

---

*The tendril got closer...*

---

*"...will eventually kill you," they both finished.*

---

*Veins could be seen on his face and his eyes were as sharp as daggers, not letting up as the tendril inched closer.*

---

*He screamed when he, Terry, and Hopper had that argument and broke their windows.*

---

*He screamed when he was pulling that train car towards him and Nancy.*

---



*He ran away as the van began to escape, hearing Nancy yell, "Mike! MIKE! GET THE HELL BACK OVER HERE! MIKE! MIKE!"*

---

He was so mad right now...so pissed off.

That was why he stuck his other hand out and began to scream from the top of his lungs. He began to levitate and the tendril dissolved, not going any further to the pulley. Both of the adults looked back at him with enlarged eyes and dropped jaws, completely flabbergasted by the sight of him like this...

---

The entire group was up and on the grass when they saw the lights to Billy's car glow much more brightly. They all shielded their eyes from its brightness.

---

The Byers and Kali didn't leave yet, leaving some time for Will to calm down and the other Byers to comfort him. Kali sat across from them. They all looked at the lights, seeing them brightening up. They all covered their eyes when it became too bright.

---

Mike continued screaming as he used everything he's got to push the tendril back into the hole and close the gate at the same time. The sides were closing in much faster than before and the tendril was close to being back into the hole. Then finally, the tendril got back in...and the entire hole, the entire gate, closed. Everything went dark. Michael rendered unconscious for a few seconds and dropped like a stone. The Demo-dogs began dropping like stones too...dead.

---

The car lights went back to their normal brightness, everyone looking at it and breathing heavily.

---

All of the lights in the cabin returned to their normal brightness as well, most of them looking around with baffled faces. Will knew what this meant though...

---

When Mike dropped, Hopper caught him immediately, pulling him into a hug. Terry hugged the boy as well. All of their eyes were watery, Mike looking worn out from using all that he could muster to close that damned gate. The boy cried and hugged them both tightly, not wanting to let go. They did the same, Terry whispering to him in a sobby voice, "You did good, Michael."

"You did so good, buddy..." Hopper also whispered to him, his voice sobby. They both kissed him on the sides of his head as they all let everything out and stay in their embrace for what felt like a really long time. The two adults were beyond relieved that he was alright. That would've killed him, considering the amount of power he had to use to close that entire thing. But he did it...and he was alive. That was all they could hope for and it paid off. The boy was also beyond relieved that the two adults were alright, considering that those Demo-dogs could have killed them while he was closing the gate.

They were all just overjoyed that they were all okay...and that this was finally over.

---

It was a month later and Hawkins Lab had finally shut down. Why? Because of what Kali and Jonathan did with Murray: release the tapes that showed the Lab's true colors. With the exaggerated truth believed, it made several high-ranking members of U.S. Department of Energy admit involvement in the death of Barbara and hiding truths.

Barbara's funeral was underway, her casket getting lowered into the ground. Her parents, relatives, Kali, and Steve were there in mourning. Most of them were crying, Steve looking solemn and holding Kali close to comfort her.

---

In Hideaway, Terry was working while the news was playing, smiling just a little hearing about all of this. The Lab was finally off of her back and she couldn't be any more proud of her teenage daughter. She carried a cooked sandwich and chips over to a table...Owens sitting at that table. "Here you are, sir," she said.

He looked up at her and smiled. "Thank you," he replied.

She then leaned forward and asked quietly, "You got the paper?" He nodded and pulled it out, it being in an envelope.

"Did exactly what you asked me to do."

She smiled at him. "Thank you."

He tucked it back in his coat pocket. "Question is, how is HE going to react to it?"

Her smile dropped as she answered, "Leave that to me, I'll explain everything." He nodded again before they both saw Jim walk in, wearing a puffy coat over some casual wear. He looked at the two and smiled, taking off his coat and sitting across from the former doctor. "Hey, Jim."

He looked at her and smiled. "Hey, Terry," he greeted back.

"Chief-o," Owens also greeted.

He kept his smile as he looked at him. "Hey, Doc. How's the leg?"

He looked down at it before looking up at the police chief. "Better, though I'm sure my football career is over." They all chuckled at that joke. He then gestured to the plate in front of him. "Wanna have some of this? I think I'll only eat the one sandwich."

Terry glared at him. "You could have told me to just give you one sandwich."

He shrugged at her. "Well, too late now." She rolled her eyes at him playfully.

Jim shook his head and said, "I'm all good. I'm on a diet now."

The dirty-blond-haired woman raised her eyebrows. "Really?" He nodded, looking proud of himself.

"Well, you're a better man than me," Owens stated before digging into his coat pocket to get out the envelope. "By the way, I got something for ya." He pushed it towards the police chief, who was just a little puzzled. He looked up at Terry, who tilted her head towards it as a

gesture to open it. He grabbed it when the former doctor began to eat his meal. He opened it up...and saw a birth certificate...for Michael. From what he pulled out, it read:

**Name:** *Michael Hopper*

**Was born in:** *Hawkins*

**Child of:** *Karen Bertuzzi*

His jaw dropped from the sight of it as he looked up at the old man, who said, "Congratulations, Pops."

"I thought-"

"Trust me, sometimes, I impress even myself."

He then looked up at Terry, still looking baffled by this. "Did you...?"

She nodded, giving him a reassuring look. "He called me first, asking if I wanted him or not. Even though I care about him very much..." She chuckled a little. "There's Jane, so..." She bobbed her head back and forth, both the men getting what she was going to say next. But still...

He drew his lips to a thin and asked her, "Can we...talk? In private?" Her smile dropped as she looked at Owens.

When he chewed and swallowed his bite, he said, "Go ahead. You said to leave it up to you." She nodded at him before she and Hopper, putting his coat back on, headed outside. Some of the waitresses were giving them looks and grins, though it'll be in vain soon. Owens was pretty amused by this.

...

They got out and into an alley near Hideaway for some privacy. He leaned against the wall while she stood in front of him. "Listen, Terry," he said. "Mike sees you as his other mom, alright?"

She frowned and nodded, crossing her arms. "I know, it's not like I'm not going to visit him again."

"But still..." He trailed off, looking away from her. "You think it's right to have me be his dad? I mean-"

"Of course." He looked straight into her eye again, seeing that she was holding his arm. "You took care of him. You were the sole parent for him while I was gone. You dress him, you do his hair, you feed him before I come with dinner..."

He scoffed. "Yeah, but then I leave for work-"

"But you come back and hang out with him. Like me with being a mom, you tried your best to be the best dad he could have." She paused. "He likes you too, Jim. He's a boy. He needs a good father figure in his life. You are a good father figure. You're not perfect, but you can make a great father, better than that bastard, Wheeler, would ever be." Well, that was a rather unfair comparison since that bastard never treated him like his son. Though, she had a point.

He did seem to really like him too...like a son would his dad. They acted like a father and son do when Terry wasn't around, before and after what happened last month. He knew he cared for him too, but...damn, he guessed he wasn't that confident in being a dad again. Sure, he didn't have a little girl to take care of, but a little boy? He seriously felt like the universe WAS giving him a second chance at parenting. This time, he won't mess it up again.

He gave her a smile and said, "If you say so."

She smiled back at him. "Trust me, you'll be great." He nodded, seeing that her hand was still holding his arm. It made him think of something.

"So, it's off, then?"

She looked puzzled. "What?"

He gestured between them. "Us."

She sighed and removed her hand from his arm. "Honestly, I can't deny that...I do love you, Jim." He nodded. "But we can't be together. You know why, right?"

It took him several seconds to find out the answer. "The kids?"

She nodded, him sighing. "Yeah..."

He grinned wryly. "Would be pretty awkward for a couple of kids that like each other to have their parents date."

She laughed at that. "It'd more embarrassing than awkward."

He chuckled. "You're right." They were silent for a bit, looking into each other's eyes. Then he spoke, "It's okay, really. I'll get over it."

"You promise?"

He nodded. "Promise." Damn, Mike was rubbing off of the both of them. Neither of them minded though. They both exchanged smiles before getting back inside the restaurant.

...

They went back to Owens's table, him asking, "Everything alright?" They both just nodded at him before he looked Jim straight in the eye. "Okay, well, if I were you, I'd want things to cool off for a while."

Both of the adults looked concerned, Jim asking, "How long is that?"

"To be safe, about a year."

They both looked surprised to hear that. "A year?" they both replied in-sync. Hopper then snatched the other sandwich and took a bite out of it, much to Owens's and Terry's amusement.

"Well, there goes your diet," she said sarcastically. He gave her the side-eye, grinning just a little.

He then thought of something as he chewed and swallowed his bite. He asked the former doctor, "How about one night?"

Both Terry and Owens looked puzzled. "One night?"

He nodded. "Yeah, how risky can that be?" He then looked at Terry, giving her a look that made her understand what he was talking

about.

"What's so important about one night?"

Terry scoffed and said, "Well, tonight is a special night..."

---

Much later, Terry was home and with the help of Kali, had Jane get ready for the one and only Snow Ball. Her hair was styled up with one strand curled on her forehead and she had a magenta-colored eyeshadow around her eyes and lip gloss. She wore a grayish-blue dress with pink dots and accents, a matching belt, and black flats. She also had a small, blue, ribbon-shaped clip on the right side of her hair. Terry just wore a white and red Christmas sweater, skinny jeans, and white flats.

The dirty-blonde-haired woman was taking pictures of her, much to her annoyance. Kali already departed to help set up the party, though she was just a chaperone. She picked up one photo that dropped from her Polaroid. "Oh, wait a minute, sweetie."

"I think that's enough, Mama," she said to her dryly.

"Just one more."

She looked defeated. "Mama-"

She positioned her camera to snap another photo. "Oh, you look so beautiful."

"MAMA!" She then snapped another photo.

As it printed out and she grabbed it, she waved it around and said, "By the way, your aunt called me earlier to see how we're doing."

She smiled a little at that. "What did you say?"

"Oh, that we're doing alright." Both of them knew that wasn't the case before the gate closed, but now...they were more than alright.

"How is she?"

She giggled, having the biggest smile as she placed the photo in her pocket. "Guess what, Jane?"

She looked curious. "What?"

She positioned herself to take one last photo and then she announced, "You and Kali are going to have a cousin next year!"

She looked really shocked to hear this. "What?!" Terry snapped the final photo of her daughter, looking all shocked at that news.

---

Steve's car drove up and parked in the parking lot of Hawkins Middle. In it were him, dressed to the nines with his suit and tie and short, glossy mullet, and Dustin, dressed in a blue suit and tie and having his curly hair in a stylized mullet. "Right, here we are," the teen said, unbuckling himself. Dustin did the same. "So, listen to me, when you get on the dance floor..."

The curly-haired boy looked him straight in the eye. "Be charming."

He nodded. "Yeah, yeah, that's right. You're learning, my friend. You're learning." They both then exited the car, the two of them straightening their dress jackets. Steve started to walk when he saw Dustin look at himself in the mirror. He knew he wasn't checking himself out, so he approached and placed a hand on his shoulder. "Hey." He turned back to him. "You look great, okay? You look..." He gave him the OK sign. "You look great." He nodded, though he didn't look all that confident about it.

He completely turned him around and placed his hand on his other shoulder, keeping his eyes locked with his. "Listen to me, Dusty, you're gonna go in there..."

He nodded. "Right..."

He shook him slightly. "Looking like a millions bucks..."

"Yeah..."

"And you're gonna slay 'em dead."



He nodded at him again. "Like a lion." He then growled, making Steve give him a weirded-out look, bare his teeth, and shake his head.

"Don't...do that, okay?"

The smile he had disappeared. "Okay."

Steve then patted his back and lead him forward to the party. "Alright, let's go." They both walked to the school, looking confident.

...

When they entered in, they could hear the music through the door. Some of the girls looked at Steve, their faces turning red, then looked away and talked to each other. They went to the front desk, seeing Mr. Clarke dressed formally. He looked up at Dustin first, smiling at him. "Well, aren't you looking snazzy tonight, sir?" he said to him, smiling.

He smiled back, pulled out some money, and gave it to him. "Thank you, my lord," he replied.

The teacher then looked up at Steve. "And you are?"

"Steve," he answered. "Steve Harrington. I'm a chaperone."

Mr. Clarke looked through another list and saw his name there, checking it off. "Alright, Mr. Harrington." He then looked at them both before asking Dustin, "Is he your ride?"

He nodded. "Yeah, he's kinda my babysitter..."

"Offered to take him since I was coming too."

The man smiled and nodded. "You're a pretty good babysitter."

Steve chuckled a little and nodded. "I've been getting that a lot."

"Well then, enjoy the Ball."

"Thank you, good sir," Dustin said before they both finally got into

the ballroom.

Of course, the colors were shades of blue and just white. It was decorated with handcrafted snowflakes and had the large, handmade banner at the front stage. There was also a handmade version of the name hanging up on the ceiling and blue/white streamers all across the ceiling as well. There were also balloons as well. Everyone in the middle was dancing to the song that boomed through the next room. There were tables for snacks and punch. Kali, who had her hair in a curly updo, had pinkish-purple eyeshadow and fuchsia-colored lipstick, and wore a plain, semi-shiny, purple dress with short sleeves, was tending the closest one, much to Steve's joy.

He gave Dustin a good pat on the back and bent down to whisper to him, "Good luck." He then left to go join up with his girlfriend.

Dustin took a deep breath and straightened up his dress jacket again, putting on a confident face and walking across the dance floor. He managed to walk past Kali, who Steve has his arm around her shoulders, and waved at her. "Hey, Kal," he greeted before walking away.

Raising an eyebrow and smiling, she greeted back, "Hey, Dustin." She then looked up at her boyfriend and pointed at the curly-haired boy. "Are you responsible for that?"

He grinned and shrugged. "Just suggested it for him."

She chuckled a little and looked back at him. "Well...he does look good."

He pointed at him. "That's what I told him."

"Excuse me," one boy said, the teens looking at him. He gave them a weird look before asking, "What's in this?"

Kali used the ladle in the punch bowl to pour into a cup. She then handed it to him and answered, "Pure fuel." He gave her another weird look before departing. Steve had given her the same look, making her grin and shrug. "What? Punch has all that sugar in it." He chuckled at that.

They both then looked to see Jonathan take a photo of a bunch of friends. When it was taken, the kids walked away. He turned back and saw the two looking at him. They exchanged smiles and waves to each other before he focused back on taking a picture for another group of friends. Steve muttered, "Jeez, that guy."

She scoffed. "What did he do?"

He shrugged. "I dunno."

She gave him a weird look before grinning again and shaking her head. "Idiot."

"Beautiful."

...

The Party were just sitting at a table when they see Dustin approach, sticking out his tongue and twirling around. All of them looked shocked to see him like this. "Whoa, what happened to you?" Jane asked, her and the other kids standing up and taking a good look at him.

He gave them puzzled looks. "What happened to me? What're ya talking about?"

She scoffed. "'What're you talking about?'"

"Dude!" Lucas exclaimed.

"Your HAIR!" Max said in disbelief.

The African-American boy went to touch it. "You wearing a bird's nest or-"

He looked quite offended and pushed him away. "Hey, nothing's wrong with my hair!" He glared at Lucas. "I'm not wearing a bird's nest, asshole!" The rest of the group chuckled, him touching the back of his mullet. "I worked hard on it."

Suddenly, the upbeat music changed into a slow, romantic-sounding one. The Party saw everyone on the dance floor slow-dancing with

one another. Everyone felt tense and awkward, not expecting it this early.

Lucas moved around a bit and took a deep breath before facing Max. Everyone saw him try to attempt to ask her to dance before she asked, "Are you asking me to dance, stalker?" He tried to act coy, then she pulled him to the dance floor. Dustin looked rather defeated that he didn't get to dance with her.

Will and Jane looked at each other, the curly-haired tomboy breaking eye contact with him to see those two slow-dance. His face began to turn red, his heart racing by the thought of asking her to dance. She looked really pretty tonight and it would be a joy to slow-dance with her. Hopefully, it wouldn't be as awkward as Lucas-

"Hey, Zombie Boy," said a girl's voice. Everyone looked at the girl who called him, her having blue eyes, freckles, and long brown hair in a long, feminine mullet. "You wanna dance?"

He felt pretty taken aback by this, but he didn't want to deny her either. "I, uh, um, I-I, uh..." he stammered, trying to figure out what to say.

Jane gave him a light tap on the arm for encouragement, him blushing a little more. However, it seemed clear that she wanted him to dance with this girl, so he turned to her and nodded. "Okay, yeah, sure, I'll dance with you."

The girl smiled. "Cool." She then grabbed his hand and they both joined the dance floor. As Will put his hands on her waist and she put hers on his shoulders, he looked at Jane, who gave him an encouraging look. He let out a deep exhale as he faced his dancing partner and waltzed with her. He was bummed that he didn't get to dance with Jane, but it was better than not dancing at all...was it?

Dustin looked at Lucas and Max dancing happily together while Jane looked at everyone else. She felt so left out. The both of them knew they couldn't dance with each other because it'd be like dancing with siblings. To them, that was gross.

The curly-haired boy looked at a group of girls and straightened

himself up. "Okay, Jane," he said to the tomboy, looking confident at her. "Wish me luck, 'cause I'm going in." He winked and clicked his tongue before going to that clique of girls. She watched as Dustin stopped to them and they stopped talking after a bit. Jane saw him offer his hand to dance with the one with the big hair, but then she talked to him and shook her head. She and the clique laughed as they walked away from him. The curly-haired girl felt sorry for him since being denied a dance was worse than not dancing at all.

She let out a deep sigh and sat back on her chair, waiting for any boy to come up and ask her to dance. Anyone, really. She could dance with Mike since this WAS the Snow Ball and she promised, but...he still had to hide, so she was left all alone, just like Dustin.

...

"No, Steve," Kali said to the guy.

"Just a quick dance," he suggested to her, grinning.

"I need to take care of this punch."

He scoffed. "No one needs punch when they're dancing."

"Steve..."

He spread his arms out. "Come on, just a quick one, then..." He trailed off when he saw Dustin alone on the dance floor...looking really sorrowful about not having a partner. His grin dropped like a stone and he muttered, "Oh shit."

The Indian girl looked concerned before looking right at the poor, lonely boy. "Oh God..."

He sighed and put his arms down. "Damn it, I blew it for him."

She looked up at him. "What?"

He put his hands on his waist, moving his hand towards Dustin. "I told him to be charming and now he's all alone on the dance floor." He shook his head. "Did I do something wrong?"

She frowned and held his arm. "You didn't. It's just bad luck."

He sighed again, the two of them looking at the curly-haired boy solemnly walk to the bleachers. "Is it?" She knew how much it sucked not having a dance partner during the slow-dance. It was because she was an outsider back then. No one wanted to dance with that one weird Indian girl. This gave her an idea though.

"I'll dance with him."

He looked down at her, baffled. "What?"

She scoffed and returned his look. "Are you jealous that he's gonna steal a dance with me from you?"

He chuckled and he shook his head. "No, nooooo, of course not." She raised an eyebrow at him before he caressed her arm. "Make sure he has the best dance of his life though, yeah?"

She smiled and nodded. "I will. Take care of the punch." She got up on her tippy-toes to kiss his cheek before leaving. Steve got in front of the bowl, watching her go to him. To be honest with himself, if that kid was going to have anyone as a dance partner, he'd be a lucky little bastard to have Kali. He deserved a dance from her.

...

Kali approached Dustin, who was sitting on the bleachers and trying to hold back tears and sniffles, though a couple were let out. She felt bad for him, but she knew she was going to light up his night. She smiled at him warmly and greeted, "Hey."

He looked up at her with wide eyes. "O-oh, hey." He wiped the tears from his face.

She offered him her hand. "You wanna come dance with me?"

He looked up at her in shock. "Wh-what?"

"Do you wanna come dance with me?"

He sniffled. "Wh-what about Steve?"

She laughed. "Trust me, he doesn't mind." He looked at the teen guy in question. When they locked eyes, he smiled and waved at him before pouring the girl that denied him some punch. He was so dumbfounded by this that he couldn't do anything else.

Kali then grabbed his hand and pulled him up. "Come on." He let her drag him onto the dance floor with everyone else. His need to cry was slowly getting away, him smiling a little. "Here." She then put his hands on her waist before putting hers on his shoulder. He just didn't know how to react, making her giggle a little. "Closer." He took a step closer. "Closer..." He took another step, making her nod. "Yep, now just move with the music, like this." She swayed back and forth, making him do so too. He began to blush a little, making her giggle again. "There you go, just like that."

He smiled, his eyes filled with joy...and love. "Just like that?" She nodded. "Okay."

...

From the punch table Steve was at, the clique looked at the two dancing. While two of the girls were whispering about this, the girl he denied kept looking at him. The jock knew she was jealous, it was written all over her face. He would know, he was quite the king of the dance floor when he danced with one of his exes back in middle school. All the girls were jealous. Damn, now he felt a little nostalgic...

...

"You wanna know something, Dustin?" she asked him.

"Wh-what is it?" he replied.

She smiled at him again. "Out of all of my sister's friends, you're my favorite."

His face lit up at that. "Really?"

She nodded. "Yep, you've always been my favorite." Not only was he Steve's favorite, but Kali's as well?! He felt like he hit the lottery, especially with her.

Kali glanced at the girl looking at the two, then Dustin did. She looked away, making the black-haired girl shake her head. "Hey." They both locked eyes with each other. "I wanna tell you that girls this age are dumb. Give them a few years and they'll be smarter." He just nodded at her, keeping his smile. "You'll drive them nuts in the future."

"Really?"

"Yeah, really. Like me with Steve, they'll be surprised when they see who you really are." It just warmed his heart to hear her say that. Steve said that to him too, but it meant a lot more coming from Kali. They were both in a relationship and they loved him. What more could he ask for?

---

Joyce and Hopper were together in the parking lot, sharing a cigarette like they did back in high school and talking to each other about how they were doing. Then something came up on Joyce's mind, making her say, "Terry calls you Jim." He looked down at her, making her do the same up to him. "I never expected her to call you Jim." She paused. "I-is there...something between you two?"

It would be no use lying to her now. Terry might've broken the news to her, were she in this position. He answered, "We both thought we had something."

She looked concerned. "You both thought?"

He nodded. "Yeah, but we both know it couldn't work out. We talked and..." He paused. "We're never getting together."

She smoked his cigarette one last time. "Why?"

He scoffed. "Our kids, Jane and Mike...they care about each other a lot. It would be embarrassing for them for their parents to suddenly date."

She chuckled at that. "Yeah, I guess it would be." Honestly, she actually felt relieved to hear that they weren't together, like a couple. It was because...well...



He pulled her close to him and she accepted it, the two holding each other's hands.

---

Another slow and romantic song played as Jane drank a cup of punch in front of Steve. This was her third and he knew what that meant, considering what happened to his girlfriend on Halloween. Well, this punch didn't have alcohol, but still...

"That's enough," he told her. "Too much sugar and you'll go crazy."

She sighed. "I just...I never felt so left out," she said to him, her voice somber. "Everyone else in the Party is dancing but me..."

He frowned, leaning a little closer to her without getting punch on his suit. "Hey." She looked up at him. "It's not that big of a deal, okay? You see the other kids not dancing?" She looked around and nodded. "There's no shame in that. If no one wants to dance with you..." He shrugged. "Then screw it, y'know? You can have fun with yourself."

She put her cup down. "Can I? What else is there to do?" She really wanted a dance, huh? Well, he could do the job like Kali-

Suddenly, they both heard the door open and looked at who entered. Jane's jaw dropped when she saw...Michael. His dark hair was well-brushed into a bowl cut. He wore a baby-blue collared shirt, a red tie tucked into a gray vest, a brown dress jacket, a blue elastic band around one of his wrists, black dress pants, and brown dress shoes. He was looking around, unfamiliar with this place...then locked eyes with Jane the second he saw her. Neither of them looked away from another for a moment.

Steve noticed this, grinning a little. "On second thought..." He pointed at Mike. "Why don't you go dance with Mikey over there?"

She kept her eyes on Mike, admiring his look tonight and completely surprised that he was even here, but then answered, "I-I don't think he knows how to dance."

He raised his eyebrows at her. "Do you?" She shook her head, his grin

widening. "It's perfect. You both can learn together." She looked at him for a few seconds before he gestured her to go to him. She gulped and walked towards the freckled boy.

He did the same before they eventually got close to each other. They both smiled at each other, looking love-struck. Jane started talking first, saying, "Hey...y-you look so..."

Hopper told Mike that Jane might call him this, so he said, "Handsome?"

She smiled at him again and nodded. "Really, really handsome." He blushed at that compliment, looking down for a bit before looking up at her. There was another word Hopper taught him to use, something he thought suited Jane well.

"You look beautiful." She blushed and looked down, smiling bashfully.

"Thanks." They both looked into each other's eyes again before she looked at the dance floor, then looked into his eyes again. "You wanna dance?"

He looked at the other kids dancing, looking nervous as he looked back at her. "I...don't know how to dance."

She gave him a reassuring look. "Me neither. You wanna...figure it out together?" He smiled and nodded at her. She took his hand and they both got into the crowd. They stopped at a good spot and faced each other. She grabbed his other hand and put them on her waist. "Like this." He kept them on her waist while she placed hers on his shoulders. He blushed at that before looking around at what the others were doing. They mimicked the dancing, smiling at each other as they were getting into it.

Steve couldn't help but smile at those little lovebirds. "There ya go..."

...

Kali and Dustin were happily dancing together. Will, to his own surprise, actually enjoyed dancing with this girl that asked him. Kali and Dustin nodded their heads to the song playing while Jane and

Mike were dancing much closer to each other than before, looking into each other's eyes lovingly.

After a moment, Jane went on her tip-toes and kissed Mike. They both had their eyes closed and enjoyed the kiss. They broke it, giving each other loving gazes as she wrapped her arms around his neck and embraced him. He blushed when she did that, but kept his smile and wrapped his arms around her waist, closing his eyes. The two of them savored this moment they would never forget.

Meanwhile, Will actually saw the whole thing not too far from him and his dancing partner. He felt like heart shattered into a million pieces when he saw them kiss and hold each other like that. Never mind that he never expected Mike to be here...what they did...he had little confidence that he and Jane would go dance and date in the future...that just shattered it altogether. It's not that Mike was bad...he apologized to him for throwing him back at the school last month after everything, but-

"Are you okay, Zombie Boy?" asked his dancing partner, looking concerned.

He looked right at her and tried to act normal. "Oh yeah, just...blanked out there for a second." She smiled at him and he continued dancing, though that moment haunted his brain for the rest of the night.

Throughout the entire night, everything seemed fine and alright for everyone. Everything has finally gotten back to normal...

Or so they thought.

---

**Oh...boy...there's a lot to unpack here. Where do I start...?**

**Hope the first third of the chapter was just as intense as it was in the show! I tried my best, like with the last chapter.**

**Now Mike is the one with Hopper as his legal parent. Michael Hopper...I think that rolls off the tongue well. I'm sure like what we'll probably see in the next season with El, he'll do a good job**

being a dad to him. And it'll also be precious, I'm sure as well~!

Oh yeah, and him and Terry aren't gonna be together for an obvious reason...there's no Topper (first ship name that came off the top of my head, sorry) if there's Mileven (or in this AU...Jike? Jachael? Mane?). At least there's some Jopper for you guys! I can see Joyce being concerned if Hopper and another woman are together, but then relieved when it turns out they're not. I didn't see it when I first watched the show, but with a few rewatches, she definitely has feelings for him, so I'm not jeopardizing her chances with him in this AU.

Becky gets a mention to make for her and Carl's complete absence in this season! Turns out that Jane and Kali are gonna have a cousin next year! In fact...I may have Becky and Carl visit again in the next season... ;)

Steve attends the Snow Ball! :D As a chaperone, but he's still there! He even let his girlfriend dance with Dustin, thought to offer a dance to Jane, and then encouraged her to dance with Mike! We stan a supportive boyfriend/mother of four~! In all seriousness though, if he had been there in canon, I could totally see him doing all of that, so I wrote that in for this AU!

I'm sorry, fluffy and adorable Mileven, even if *I* write it, will always get to me. This was no exception, especially since this is the SNOW BALL~! I just love them, they're adorable, they deserve each other~!

Poor Will though...he had to go through his first heartbreak, seeing his crush kiss and hug another boy. He'll get over it...or not. I can't make any guarantees that he'll get over it, it'll have to depend on what happens in Season 3 when it comes out.

This is the end of Season 2. I hope you guys enjoyed it! Just like the last season, I had a lot of fun writing this! I was really looking forward to writing this season out since I loved it just as much as the last! I think it paid off, seeing your guys' reactions to the chapters!

I wonder what Season 3 has in store because...well, some

changes I made will impact what I'll write for M11 Season 3. For example, I have a strong feeling that Steve and Robin (from what I've seen in the teaser, that's what the new girl's name tag read to me) will hit it off in the next season. Not that I'm opposed to it, but since Steve and Kali are still together in this AU, I'll have to see what to do if that's the case. I could make another love triangle, but this AU already had three (Jane x Mike x Will \*though it's one-sided, let's be real, Hopper x Terry x Joyce, and Max x Lucas x Dustin \*though that's WAY in the background\*), so...I dunno.

There's also the case with El and Max in canon. We don't know if they get along after everything with the gate. If El's still giving Max the cold shoulder when Season 3, then, well...I'll have to do something with Mike and Will, without making Will OOC, that is. Mike and Max already get along in this AU, so there's no need to worry about that.

Well...with all of that said, this fanfic will be labeled as complete until Stranger Things Season 3 premieres on the 4th of July! I still can't wait! Tell me if there's any typos or mistakes I might've missed on this chapter (I proofread it three times, but I can still miss some mistakes), keep supporting this fanfic like you guys do, and I'll see you guys on the first chapter of Season 3! :D Bye!

## 53. First Thing

SEASON 3, BABYYYYYYYYYYYY! WHOOOOOOOO! LET'S DO THIS!

Okay, I'm calm.

So, Season 3 dropped on the 4th of July. I watched it. I...kind of enjoyed it. I rewatched it to make some plans with this fanfic. I kept going back and forth about how I should handle certain parts of the plot, thus creating a writer's block.

Not only that, but...I had a rough end to my summer. One of my family's dogs, who we've had for 11 years, passed away. We, and her sister, our other dog, had great memories with her, so her passing took a hard toll on us. I didn't even want to write for a while. Now, I'm alright, the rest of my family is, and I'm now ready to get this out.

That's why it took so long to get this out. I hope it was worth it!

Also, yeah, I said I kind of enjoyed the third season. There are reasons why I didn't fully enjoy it, but I won't get into them right now. Maybe in the next chapter, but let's just say, some parts of Season 3 I find problematic will be changed in this fanfic 'cause, well, they're problematic.

Well, with all that said, here's the first chapter! Enjoy!

\*Also, how do you guys like the new cover? I screencapped it from a Stranger Things intro creator. The title looks a LOT better than it did before!\*

---

It was the summer of 1985. School was out, summer was in. Nighttime fell upon Hawkins and it was time to sleep...or party...or hang out...

Or kiss a lot.

At the Hopper cabin in Mike's room, the radio began playing "Never Surrender" by Corey Hart. His room looked a lot better than it did

before. There was blue wallpaper on the walls and ceiling, he got better drawers, he had more lights, he even had a few nerdy things like posters and action figures in his room. There were even some cassette tapes near the radio. It was all thanks to Jane and the rest of the Party that got him that stuff.

And speaking of Jane, they were making out with each other. Over the past six months, Jane decided to let her hair grow out, now being layered and at shoulder-length. She wore a dark-colored, short-sleeved, open plaid shirt, a plain dull blue shirt underneath that, baggy jeans, and white socks. Mike still had his black hair in a bowl cut, still a bit curly. He wore a yellow, short-sleeved shirt, a sleeveless denim jacket, jeans, and white socks. He still had the blue elastic band around his wrist. Neither of them could ever get their lips away from each other. They just loved making out.

When the chorus began to chime in, Jane broke the make-out session and began singing enthusiastically, "And nobody wants to know you now~..." Mike smiled and laughed a little as she imitated the guitar breaks. "And nobody wants to show you HOW~!" She sang that at a high off-key, making her boyfriend laugh out loud this time. She gestured Mike to sing with her. "Come on!"

He sighed and sang along with her, "...if you're lost and on your own~..." They both leaned towards each other, holding each other's hands when singing that line. Then, they looked really happy and spread their arms out. "You can never surrender~!" They both laughed and hugged each other.

They then gazed at each other lovingly. "You were off-sync, Mike," Jane told him.

He scoffed and replied, "YOU were off-sync, Jane."

She grinned and leaned closer to his face. "No, YOU were off-sync."

He leaned closer to her face as well. "No, *YOU* were off-sync." Then they started kissing constantly again.

...

Outside of his son's room, Jim was watching TV, eating chips and drinking beer. He even had salsa dip between his thighs. Those kids were pretty loud, so he leaned back on the recliner he got out of storage and peeked through the three-inch gap of the door. He saw Jane's back, then a few seconds later, saw her making out with Mike still. The protective father in him emerged and he yelled, "Hey!" The two stopped kissing, looking back at him with wide eyes as Mike used his power to close the door.

He sighed and stood up. "You know the rule, you two: three inches minimum!" He walked to the door and tried to open it. Of course, Mike locked it, so he couldn't open it. He then slapped the door a couple times. "Mike, bud, open this door." There was no answer as he heard the lovebirds sing more of "Never Surrender". He sighed and shook his head. Those two damn kids...

He began rattling the knob. "Come oooooon, open the door." Nothing had changed. "I said, open the damn doo-" Finally, he heard the door unlock and he opened it up, seeing the two carrying an English book together. They looked up at him, looking annoyed as if he was interrupting something.

"Pop?" Mike asked coyly, that nickname given as a better alternative to "Dad".

"What's the matter?" Jane also asked just as coyly.

Jim drew his lips to a thin line and asked, "You're both reading and singing at the same time?"

They both nodded, her answering, "Yeah. Takes a lot of practice, but Mike's getting used to it." She looked at her boyfriend. "Right?"

He nodded. "Yeah, yeah, definitely." They both smiled at him.

Jim didn't buy it, but he didn't know what else to do other than look embarrassed. These kids were always fooling around-hell, Jane was supposed to help him learn how to talk and read more. He was almost there, but a little more learning didn't hurt. After that, they could hang out. However, he knew she found this as an excuse to kiss and fool around with Mike. He didn't want his son to catch the



behavior he had when he was younger, but still, what the hell could he do...?

---

Jane rode off on her bike. A basket was added to carry her walkie-talkie. With it, Mike said to her, "*That was funny!*"

She giggled and replied, "Yeah. You saw the look on his face?"

---

He flopped onto the bed with a big grin on his face. "He was so red, like a tomato!" She just laughed before he asked, "Is it actually possible to sing and read at the same time?"

---

She looked thoughtful. "Um...I think so," she answered. "Like I said, it takes a lot of practice."

---

The boy nodded, smiling. "I wish I could still be with you, Jane."

---

"Me too, Mike." There was a pause before she smiled. "But I'll see you again tomorrow!"

---

His smile turned into a grin. "First thing?"

---

"First thing."

---

That was the end of their conversation, the freckled boy putting the walkie-talkie on his drawer. He couldn't stop grinning more. He had broken out of his shell over the past half year. He was more expressive and fun, in his honest opinion. Jane might be the same as she was back in '83, but she could have fun as well. They were also a lot more comfortable with each other. He was just so happy that he could live this kind of life with the people he cared about most.

Yes, even his new "pop" Hopper, even if he might not approve of him and Jane...having fun.

---

Jane had finally arrived at the new Starcourt Mall, where she was meeting the rest of the Party. Lots of people were going in and out of the large, brightly-lit building. She mounted her bike at the bike parking spot, where Lucas, Will, and Max were waiting. They all approached her as she got off her bike. "You're late," Lucas said.

"I know," she replied.

"AGAIN." She sighed.

"We're gonna miss the opening," Max said.

"Not if we stop whining and go there. Let's go."

"Not if we stop whining and go there, nyeh, nyeh," Lucas repeated mockingly.

Jane playfully punched his arm. "Shut up." The kids then went inside the mall together.

There were many people bustling inside of it and it was covered by many lights, but they managed to find their way to the theater. "Lemme guess, you and Mike..." He made kissing sounds.

She rolled her eyes at him. "Ha ha, REAL mature, Lucas."

He then pitched his voice up to mimic Jane's voice. "Oh, Mike, forget about our friends~! I wanna make out with you forever~!" She gave him the side-eye.

"Okay, Lucas, you can stop," Max said.

"Yeah, stop," Will said.

Lucas and Max looked at him a little, then focused back on Jane. The brown-haired girl threw her hands up. "Is it so bad to spend some romantic time with my badass boyfriend?"

Max wrapped her arm around Lucas and replied, "I'm spending romantic time with MY boyfriend."

He smiled at her and did the same, but also raised an eyebrow. "You forgot the 'badass' part."

She raised her eyebrows at him. "Oops." They both giggled. Will just sighed and wished the romantic talk was over.

The kids descended down one of the escalators, trudging against the way of people, then reached to the lowest floor. Jane accidentally bumped into a teenager, making the teen shout, "Hey, watch it!"

As the Party passed through, they all saw Lucas's little sister, Erica, eating ice cream with her friends. She gave the Party a smug look and said, "Yeah, watch it, nerds!"

Lucas narrowed his eyes at her. "Isn't it past your curfew?"

She looked annoyed and retorted, "Isn't it past time you DIED?!" Her friends laughed at that.

The Party continued walking as Lucas and Erica exchanged insults. They then went into "Scoops Ahoy!", an ice cream parlor. As they reached to the cash register, they saw a blonde-haired girl with a face full of freckles wearing a sailor uniform. The name-tag read "ROBIN". The tomboy rung the bell repeatedly. Her face was of annoyance as she said, "Oh, dingus, your children are here!"

The sliding windows opened, revealing Steve himself in the male version of Robin's uniform. He also looked annoyed. "Seriously? Again?" The kids looked at him, their faces begging, especially Jane's. She's learned that he had a soft spot for her pleading look, so she tilted her head, widened her eyes, and frowned, ringing the service bell once again.

Steve looked away and muttered, "Oh my God..." How his girlfriend's little sister was cute while pleading was beyond his damn knowledge.

...

Steve opened the back door of the parlor, letting the kids run through the hallway of the back. "I'll tell you little shits again, if anyone hears about this-"

"We're dead," the Party replied synonymously. He sighed and went back to work.

When he did though, he saw his one and only girlfriend, Kali Ives, walk in. She wore a black and white printed dress and black heels. Her hair was brushed well and a little past her shoulders now, hair tucked behind her ears. He grinned when he saw her, being up at the cash register while Robin was serving a couple. "Ahoy, Kali," he greeted, looking at her eyes lovingly.

"Ahoy, Steve," she greeted back, looking at him just as lovingly.

Robin rolled her eyes and muttered, "Oh my God..."

"Can I get a scoop of Buttered Pecan on a regular cone?"

"Coming right up, beautiful." He then looked at his coworker, who sighed and grabbed a cone. He then looked at his girlfriend again. "So...how was the internship today?"

"Shitty," she answered plainly. "How was your job today?"

"Shitty."

"Not because of me, is it?" Robin asked with dry humor, giving Kali the scoop.

He sighed and punched in the numbers in the cash register. "\$1.25, please."

She smirked at him, reached into her purse with her free hand, and pulled out a dollar bill and some change. "You're still coming over tonight, right?"

He nodded and gave her spare change. "Yep, you can count on me."

"Thanks." She then kissed his cheek and left. He watched her leave, grinning as he watched her lick the ice cream.

"Hey, how about you stop checking out your girlfriend over there and do your job?" He gave Robin the side-eye, making her smirk.

...

Jane poked her head out of a door, looking to see if anyone's around. She looked back at her friends and said, "Coast is clear." They all then walked to the screening of the sneak preview of Day of the Dead.

They managed to find four seats and sat next to each other in them. Jane looked at her African-American friend and said, "See, Lucas? We made it."

"But we missed the previews..." he replied, disappointed.

"But we still made it...Fart Face," Max said. They both just smiled at that.

Will opened his backpack, Jane helping him get out the drinks and snacks they smuggled into the theater. They handed some to Lucas and Max as the movie began. The four kids, as well as the entire theater, was watching what was going to happen in eager anticipation. However, suddenly, the film abruptly stopped, making the kids, and the theater, react pretty madly at that. Jane looked as disappointed as Will was, exhaling deeply and throwing her hands up.

---

The entire power to the mall was shut down, but it wasn't the only one. One-by-one in mere seconds, the buildings of Hawkins, stores and homes, were losing power. As Kali began to drive home, she noticed the buildings losing power. She thought that was odd.

---

In the Ives home, Terry, who had her hair down and was in a night gown, was calling Becky about her new niece and their visit to here. "I'm sorry that we couldn't make it to Tina's birth."

*"Oh, it's alright, sis," Becky said over the phone. "Besides, she's gonna meet ya and the rest of the girls tomorrow!"*

She smiled. "Okay, when tomorrow?" Before Becky could answer, the entire home went dark, cutting off the call. She gasped, looking shocked and around. "What the hell...?"

...

After a couple moments, the power suddenly went back on, Terry hearing the dial tone on her phone. She sighed and hung up the phone. She knew Becky was going to call her back, she just had to wait.

---

The entire mall's power went back on, meaning that the movie came back on and resumed. Nearly everyone in the theater cheered, even Jane. Will was happy that she was happy before suddenly feeling...a chill on the back of his neck. He touched it, feeling his hard goosebumps. He felt his breath cut short. He hadn't felt like that since...

The Mind Flayer.

How he'd see him at home, how he possessed him on the school field, how he left his body the night the gate closed...

"Will?" Jane asked, making him break out of his thoughts and look at her. "What's wrong?"

Shit, it must've looked obvious that he wasn't alright. However, he couldn't let her know that, so he shook his head. "Nothing."

She still had her concerned look. "Are you sure?"

He nodded, trying not to blush. "Y-yeah, I'm sure." She nodded back and focused back on the movie. He also focused back on the movie, heavily sighing. Maybe it was nothing. He didn't know. Plus...despite it being half a year, he still couldn't get over his crush on Jane. Sure, she was his first friend...and his first crush, but she had a boyfriend...a much more superior boyfriend, so he had to move the hell on. But that memory of Jane and Mike kissing at the Snow Ball still haunted him...

Damn it, he should stop worrying about that and focus on the damn movie.

---

After a moment, Terry's phone rang and she answered, "Becky?"

*"What happened, Terry?"* her sister asked.

She scoffed, shaking her head. *"There was just a power outage."*

She heard her sister laugh. *"At least you didn't hang up on me for no reason."*

She laughed too. *"Please, you know me better than that."* She leaned against the wall. *"So, when are you and Carl and Tina coming?"*

*"Probably in the afternoon. You'd be at work, right?"*

She shook her head. *"I have a day-off tomorrow."*

*"Oh, you convinced your bosses at Hideaway to give ya one?"*

She sighed. *"Um, listen, Becky, I don't work at Hideaway anymore..."*

*"What?!"* She sounded pretty shocked. *"Why?!"*

She swapped the phone to her other hand. *"Ever since this new mall here opened, businesses in downtown have been closing down. Hideaway was one of them."*

*"Damn, sorry, Terry."*

*"BUT, I did get a new job at the new mall."*

She heard Becky sigh in relief. *"Which is?"*

*"Full-time employee at the Gap."*

Becky scoffed. *"The GAP?"*

Terry laughed before seeing Kali home. They waved to each other before she headed up to her bedroom. *"They pay. Anyway, you can just settle in here at my home. I'll leave the spare key under the doormat."*

*"Alright."*

She then yawned. *"I need to get some sleep."*

She then heard her niece crying in the background. *"So does little Tina. See you tomorrow!"*

"Bye." She then hung up and went upstairs. "Kali!"

"Uh, yeah?" her adoptive daughter called from her bedroom.

"Your aunt, uncle, and cousin are going to visit tomorrow."

"Oh, er...how long?"

"A week."

...

Inside the bedroom, she was dressed in her night gown, removing her makeup and her hair more fluffed out than before. She was smiling since she kinda missed Aunt Becky. "Alright. You gonna tell Jane that?"

"I'm going to bed, so you'll have to do it."

She put her makeup removers down and stood up. "Okay." She grabbed a book and got onto her bed. "By the way, Steve's coming over for the night. That's fine, right?"

...

Terry smiled a little. She has become pretty lenient with her daughters' boyfriends visiting them and vice-versa...with one exception. "You two aren't going to get into any trouble, are you?"

She heard her adoptive daughter scoff. "Of course not, mum!"

She giggled a little. "Okay, just checking. Good night, sweetheart."

"Good night, mum." And with that, the dirty-blonde-haired woman got into her room to read a book, then go to sleep.

...

Later, Steve arrived. Jane did too and she was quick to get up to her room to change and go to sleep, well, before her sister told her the



news. He and Kali sat together on their bed, him in nothing more than his underwear. They talked, then cuddled into bed together, sharing kisses.

"Y'know, Kal?" he said to her as he broke the kiss.

"What?" she asked him.

"I'd actually like to meet more of your family."

She smiled. "Maybe Aunt Becky will like you. Not sure about Uncle Carl."

He chuckled. "What, is he a stiff one?"

"Mmmm...yeah." She nodded when she said that.

He looked away from her and said, "Whooo, boy."

"You probably won't see them until tomorrow night...or the night after."

"Yeah, probably." They shared another kiss, then Steve said in a voice poorly mimicking Terry's, "Good night, sweetie." She laughed and playfully punched his shoulder. "What?"

"You're an idiot."

He grinned. "Tell me something I don't know, beautiful." They shared more kisses before falling asleep.

---

Jonathan Byers, on his bed in his family's home, suddenly woke up and sat up, looking aghast about something. "Wait a minute," he murmured to himself before looking at his watch for the time. He looked more aghast when he saw the time. "Oh shit, no!" He then scrambled out of bed.

---

In the morning, Kali suddenly rose up from her bed and exclaimed, "Shit!" Steve immediately woke up as she reached to her drawer to get the watch Steve gave her as a birthday gift. Her eyes widened at

the time. "Shitshitshit!"

He sat up. "What?"

Kali instantly got off of her bed in a panic. "It's nearly nine!"

Now he got out of the bed in a panic. "Oh shit!"

---

The auburn-haired teenager rushed to his closet and hurriedly got out dull-colored shirt, tan pants, socks, and formal shoes. He was muttering curses under his breath for forgetting to set the clocks back last night.

---

She put on her watch as she ran to her closet, groaning. "I forgot to set the clock after the power outage last night!" They both dressed up in a hurry, Steve dressing in his "Scoops Ahoy!" uniform and Kali dressing in the dress and heels she wore before. He fell when he tried to get his shorts on. Why? Neither of them knew.

---

He got dressed, slung his camera over his shoulder, and got out of his room in a hurry. He was finishing buttoning up his shirt as Joyce, dressed in a plain white shirt and jeans, came from the kitchen. "Hey, hey, hey, wait a minute," she said to him softly.

He stopped and looked at his mother reassuringly. "Oh, no, I'll just eat at work," he told her. "I'm running late."

She gave him a reassuring smile. "I know." She then gave him a reused cup of fresh coffee and a paper lunch bag. "I just don't want ya to be late for work AND be hungry at the same time."

He honestly felt happy and guilty that his mother was this caring about him. It's not that he didn't appreciate it-in fact, it's a lot better than before. Since he was late though, he just smiled at her and said, "Thanks, Mom."

"Hey, have a good day there, Jonathan," Will said from the kitchen.

He chuckled a little and replied, "I'll try! Thanks!" They waved each

other goodbye before he went out the door, got into his car, set his breakfast on the passengers seat and the coffee on the cup-holder, started it up, and drove off.

---

When they got completely dressed and got their things, they bolted out of Kali's room and hurried down the stairs. Terry and Jane were downstairs. The dirty-blond-haired woman was dressed in a tan collared shirt with gray, black, and white stripes, a white belt, navy-blue jeans, and white heels. She had her hair in its usual ponytail. The tomboy wore an oversized navy-blue shirt, white pants, and white and black sneakers. She saw Kali and Steve bolt out the door, making her shout, "Wait, you're forgetting your breakfast!" They were already out before they heard that though.

She sighed and muttered, "I wish I woke them up earlier."

"They can still get breakfast on the way, right?" Jane asked her.

She looked at her youngest daughter and answered, "Yeah, but that fast food's not good for your health."

She nodded, eating her eggs. "True."

Suddenly, the phone rang, so the woman went and got it, greeting, "Hello?"

*"Hey, Terry...it's me,"* Jim's voice greeted back rather nervously.

She looked surprised to hear his voice. "Jim?" Jane went stiff by the mention of his name, so she began eating her eggs faster.

*"N-not so loud, I don't wanna alert Jane."*

She looked back at Jane scarfing through her breakfast before taking a big gulp of her orange juice. Terry put her hand on her hip and said, "Jane." She stopped and looked at her, guilty. "Don't eat so fast. You don't want to get sick later."

She nodded nervously and replied, "Okay, Mama." She then ate her normal food at a normal pace.

The woman stifled a laugh and told Jim, "Too late now."

She heard him sigh. *"Listen, do you have some time to meet up at Melvald's?"*

She leaned against the counter. "Well, today's my day-off, so I got plenty of time."

*"Okay, good. I need to talk to you and...Joyce about something."*

She smirked. "Let me guess, our kids?" Jane stopped eating for a second.

*"Yeeeeeeaaaah..."*

She sighed again. "Alright, I'll be there. See ya."

"Bye." She hung up the phone and looked at her younger daughter intently.

"What are you and Mike doing?"

"Just..." she answered, not looking at her for a second and shrugging. "Hanging out." She didn't look like she bought it, so she sighed and dropped her fork. "Listen, Mike and I...we just really care about each other and we..."

She nodded and walked towards her. "I know." She bent down and placed a hand on her shoulder. "You kids are at that age and there was all the stuff that happened in the last two years. That doesn't mean you two should lose any self-control." Jane looked away, looking and feeling embarrassed. Her mom then hugged her. "Hey, it's okay, sweetie. I'll go meet up with Hopper and see what's going on, okay?"

She looked back at her and nodded back. "Okay."

She then kissed her temple. "Don't get into any more trouble at Dustin's."

"Mama!" The woman then grabbed her purse and proceeded out the door. Jane sighed, hoping things won't go wrong. She really, really,

REALLY liked Mike and she was sure that he felt the same about her. She hoped Hopper wouldn't ruin anything.

---

Steve was driving his car pretty fast, but Kali didn't mind. They both had picked up just a coffee on the way, Kali sipping hers before Steve abruptly parked near Hawkins Post, making her spill her coffee on her heels. "Jesus!" she exclaimed.

"Oh shit, I'm so sorry!" the jock also exclaimed, looking at his girlfriend.

She wiped a couple drips of coffee off of her mouth and unbuckled herself, using spare napkins from the glove compartment to wipe off her heels. "It could've been worse. I could've spilt it on my dress." She then got out of the car and walked around to Steve's open window. "I'll see you tomorrow, babe."

He looked a little hurt. "Aw, not tonight?"

She scoffed. "Just so you know, I have a life OUTSIDE of our relationship."

He laughed. "Aw, no worries, Kal, I was just joking." They then gave each other a peck before seeing Jonathan Byers's car pull up to Hawkins Post pretty fast. Both of them raised their eyebrows. "Well, at least we're not the only ones against the clock."

"You got that right." They both saw Jonathan get out of the car with him from drinking a reusable coffee cup and carrying a lunch bag. The three teens exchanged waves.

"Alright, well, see ya." Steve then drove off, Kali waving to him before Jonathan caught up with her.

"Slept until the last minute too?" he asked her.

She sighed and got into the building with him, throwing the napkins in the trash can. "I wish I hadn't."

"Me too."

---

Finally, Steve had arrived at the mall, parking and almost hitting another car in a panic. He quickly got out the cars with his keys and cup of coffee. He was sprinting, not giving a damn if he was spilling his coffee. While doing that, he was muttering, "Shit, shit, shit..."

As he got inside, he accidentally bumped into someone, making him spill coffee all over them. Since it was still hot, it hurt. He saw that he bumped into a girl around his age, looking really pissed at him before shoving him away. "Asshole!" she cried out before running away.

He sighed deeply, wishing his morning wasn't more shitty. "Goddamn it." He picked up the spilled coffee and ran to the nearest trash can, throwing the empty cup in there. He finally got into Scoops Ahoy, where his annoying and snarky coworker Robin was. It took him a few seconds to see that she already opened up the store and started everything up, meaning one thing.

"You're late."

He nodded, looking irritated. "Yup." He began to walk to the Employee's Only section.

She narrowed her eyes to look at the coffee splatter on his uniform. "You're gonna work in THAT?"

He glared at her. "Listen, I've had a shitty morning and I don't want YOU adding to my misery, alright?" She held her hands up as he went inside to wash it out.

---

Hiding behind a wall was Max, Lucas, Will, Jane, and Mike. The latter two, of course, were holding hands. They heard Dustin come in, after a month of Camp Know Where, and get into his room. The rest of the kids looked at Mike, who nodded and closed his eyes. They all heard his toys become active, sure that he was really shocked to see them do this. They heard the toys close to them, so Max peeked out and saw that Dustin was following them with his Farrah Fawcett spray. She looked at Lucas with a smile, then him to Will, then Will to Jane, then she whispered to Mike, "Okay, now." With his nose bleeding, he opened his eyes and the toys stopped.

The kids quietly walked to Dustin, Lucas holding the handmade "Welcome Home, Dustin!" banner and the rest having party noisemakers in their mouths. Mike and Jane were still holding hands. Max counted down to three with her fingers and finally, they all jumped up and blew the noisemakers. Dustin screamed, turned, and sprayed the Farrah Fawcett spray right on Lucas's eyes. He began screaming as well, in pain. The other kids backed away, Mike holding Jane close as a means of protection.

Here, they thought nothing could go wrong...

---

Stopping here. What do you guys think? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?

Ah~, Mileven~. What can we do without you~? Well, actually...

Yep, Becky and Carl are coming back, with a new child! They'll play the role the rest of the Wheelers played in canon (with the exception of Becky, she's just happy with her marriage and budding family).

And yes, Will still has a crush on Jane, despite her and Mike dating. He's trying to get over it, but can't. Poor boy...

That said though, I'm sure we've all seen that one scene in Episode 3. Seeing that, well...it can go both ways: he's not attracted to anyone at the moment or he really is gay. Or maybe both. However, I'm going to keep his crush on Jane in this AU, but maybe do something that'll show that he's not straight. After all, I do have a head-canon that he's not straight, but not exactly gay.

Kali and Steve are still cute~, as well as Jonathan just being Jonathan.

I plan to have more self-deprecating comedy for Steve, since he's still with Kali and happy with her. It's more like since she's in an internship and he's not, he feels like his life took a shit turn, having bad luck during his job. No worries though, I'll make him happy in the end!

**Continue your support of this fanfic and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

**\*P.S.: In case you guys didn't know, I'm currently going through a editing sweep of this fanfic right now, so if details look different, that's why. Also, since I have college classes all 5 days of the week, don't expect me to update as often as I did before.\***



## 54. The More, The Merrier

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Terry drove to Melvald's, seeing that Hopper's car and Joyce's were the only ones parked there. She sighed, reminded of how barren downtown really was. She parked and got out and into the store, seeing Hopper and Joyce next to the clearance sale banner on the windows. She smiled at the both of them. "Good morning, Joyce, good morning, Jim," she greeted the two.

Joyce smiled at her and waved. "Morning, Terry," she greeted back.

"Yeah, morning," Jim plainly greeted back.

The dirty-blond-haired woman then crossed her arms and looked at the police chief. "So...what have our kids gotten up to?"

The brunette looked surprised. "'Our kids'? You mean Jane and Mike?"

...

While Joyce was tagging the shopping items accordingly, Hopper began telling her and Terry what was happening last night, sitting on the open shelf. "And then Mike just slams the door on me," he said, upset. "Right in my face."

"Uh-huh..." Joyce said.

Terry took a deep breath. "And you think my daughter is responsible for this?"

He looked her straight in the eye. "Yes."

She shrugged. "Okay, how?"

He looked puzzled. "HOW?"

She nodded, her eyes large. "Yes, Jim, how? HOW is Jane responsible

for Mike's behavior?"

He stood up. "She...she..." He threw his hands up. "She's all that Mike thinks about."

She gave him a weird look. "That's HER fault?"

"Come on, Terry..." He paused to hold up a finger. "She always wants to visit him at any time of day..." Then held up another. "She's always kissing him..." Terry looked away as he held up a third. "And she's always making him bullshit his way to excuses!"

The dirty-blonde-haired woman shrugged again and looked at him. "Okay, so maybe this is a problem."

"Not 'maybe', it just IS!" He walked away from the women and put his hands on his temples. "This is driving me crazy..."

"Just take it down, Hopper," Joyce said as she went to another isle to tag more items. Terry followed her.

"I need them to break up."

Terry looked shocked and rather a bit angry at him suggesting that. "No."

He scoffed, looking baffled. "No?"

"I KNOW a break-up with Mike would destroy Jane."

"But she can get over it. Every girl does."

Now she scoffed and looked baffled. "I'm sorry, in case you didn't know, she was the one that found Mike in the first place and I know how much she cares for him, so I KNOW she wouldn't get over a break-up!"

"Hey, hey, guys!" Joyce said, getting in-between them. They both looked at her, agitated at each other. "Let's just cool down, okay?" They didn't answer, but tried to remain calm. "Whether they stay together or break up are neither of your decisions to make, okay?" They looked away from her. "They can make their own choices."

"Then what can we do?" Hopper asked. "Can we all agree that they're spending WAY too much time together?!"

Terry sighed once more. "You guys know I want my daughters to be as happy as they can be." She glared at Hopper. "We both know what happens when we take Mike away from Jane and Jane away from Mike, don't we?" The police chief sighed as well, rubbing his face in distraught. "Besides, aren't they just kissing?"

He leaned forward in front of a shelf. "Yeah, but it's CONSTANT!" He aimed his hand towards her. "*CONSTANT!* You and I both know that's not healthy, okay?! That's not...NORMAL!"

As Joyce tagged the last item in the isle she was at, she walked out of it and said, "Okay, I have to agree with Terry on this one."

He looked pretty appalled and sad to see her take this woman's side. "Joyce-"

She held her hands up. "Hop, listen. You can't just force them apart and expect a happy ending." Jim was pacing around, visibly upset and throwing around one of the store items. "Plus, they're not little kids anymore, they're teenagers." Terry tried to not feel old by that comment and so were the rest of the adults here. "You order them around like a cop, of course they're going to rebel. It's what we did as teenagers-" She pointed at Terry. "-probably not her-" The woman mentioned chuckled a little at that. "-but still, you shouldn't be surprised that they'll act like we did when we were their age."

Jim sighed deeply. "But, see, here's the thing..." He sat on one of the chairs the store had. "I don't want Mike to act like I did when I was his age." The women's faces dropped into solemn expressions. "His behavior right now is resembling my younger self's and I don't want that for him. It's something that'll get him in shit, alright?" The women didn't answer, but looked like they understood. "That's why I can't just let him and Jane do whatever they want. There must be some way to...to make them understand."

Joyce shrugged and suggested, "You can go talk to them."

Terry looked at her and nodded. "Yeah, that's a good idea."

He scoffed at the both of them. "Talking never works, ladies."

The dirty-blonde-haired woman walked towards him sternly. "Jim, yelling and ordering is not the same as talking." He walked away from her, sighing.

"Terry's right," Joyce added, tagging a tissue box. "Just give them the heart-to-heart."

He looked puzzled at that last term. "Heart-to-heart?"

"Our talk with Mike on the way to Lab last year?" Terry said, making him look down at her. "It's when you sit down and talk to someone in a non-demeaning manner." Jim sighed and leaned forward against a wall.

"You open up your feelings to them, y'know, being yourself, but also sincere," her friend added. "They'll find that you're on their level and they'll start listening to you."

She nodded. "And from there, you can start creating some boundaries."

He looked thoughtful, mumbling to himself, "Boundaries..."

"There is one important thing though." He looked at Terry. "No matter how they respond, always stay calm."

Joyce nodded. "Yes, that's key. Stay calm." Stay calm...stay calm...hell if he didn't try, he guessed.

But then he thought of something else, looking at the dirty-blonde-haired woman. "You can talk to Jane, right, Terry?"

"Yeah," she replied. "I can do a heart-to-heart with Jane. You do the same with Mike."

He looked pleading. "But he'll listen to you-"

"Jim." He looked at her with saddened eyes. "I let you be his father for a reason. From what I've heard, you've been doing good-"

"Not good enough."

She looked back at Joyce, who looked him straight in the eye. "You can get through it, Hop. In fact..." She walked to the cash register, him and Terry following. She got out a notepad and a pen. "I can help you find the right words for your heart-to-heart."

"Maybe I can too," Terry offered.

He smiled at her. "The more, the merrier." The women smiled back at him as Joyce began to write down the words for his heart-to-heart.

---

Kali passed Melvald's without her mother noticing, carrying a bag of wrapped sandwiches. She deeply sighed, looking down at her watch and walking faster.

She eventually entered into the building and started passing the sandwiches to everyone, starting with the secretary. "Here you go," she said to her.

"Thank you, Kali," she said back to her.

She handed out another sandwich to another woman in the building before opening up the photography room, where Jonathan was processing a photo. He instantly turned back and shouted, "Nonononono!" He then realized it was his friend giving him a sandwich. "Kali."

"Sorry," she replied, placing the sandwich on a table near the door before closing it. She then went into the meeting room, filled with men talking about various topics. She gave them each a sandwich. One of them, Bruce, made a demeaning comment about a woman, making the Indian girl roll her eyes as the men began to laugh.

As she was about to get out, she heard her boss say, "In six hours, we go to print, fellas. Give me something real."

"Oh, I think they're real," Bruce said, met with an eruption of laughter from the other men.

She had always wanted to make her mark in this job, no matter what,

so she turned and said, "There's Starcourt." The men in the room looked at her. She couldn't tell if they were interested or not, but she continued, "I was thinking, everyone loves the mall, but small businesses have closed because of it. There's five on Main that's out of business, so-"

The blonde-haired man, who unwrapped and opened his sandwich, pointed at her and said, "'The Death of Small-Town America.'" She nodded, smiling a little. "I like that, I like that a lot. But you know what story would blow that one out of the water?" She looked confused before he showed his open sandwich to her. "'The Case of the Missing Mustard on my Hamburger.'" The men erupted in laughter once more, much to Kali's dismay as her smile dropped completely. She should have known they wouldn't take her seriously. "How about you follow the clues and solve the mystery of the missing condiment, Curry Kali?" The men continued laughing as she gave him a half-assed smile and snatched his burger away from him.

As she left the meeting room, he said to another man, "Look out, Phil, she might take your job!"

"Assholes," the Indian girl muttered to herself. She swore to God, these white men could not take her seriously to save themselves, so they treat her like dirt to feel better about their pathetic lives.

---

While Max was "helping" Lucas get the spray out of his eyes, Dustin was enthusiastically showing Will, Jane, and Mike the inventions he created during camp. Mike and Jane had linked arms, the freckled boy caressing hers. "This...is the Forever Clock," he told them, holding a handcrafted windmill he was turning. "Powered by wind, very useful during the apocalypse." He had Will hold it, looking pretty interested in it.

Dustin went back to his bag and pulled out a hammer connected to a power machine. "And I call this, the Slammer!" He turned it on and had it go close to Mike and Jane. The telekinetic boy held his girlfriend close and away from the Slammer. He chuckled and said, "Don't worry, I'm not gonna use this on you guys." He narrowed his eyes at him before he put that away.

He then grabbed his entire bag and laid it on the floor. "THIS...is my greatest creation yet." The three crouched down on the floor to see what he came up with, since he was so adamant about it. He unzipped it and showed a ham shack next to a dissembled pole. "Guys, meet Cerebro!" He looked up at his friends happily to see their reactions.

The three looked puzzled, Jane looking up and asking, "What are we looking at here?"

"An unassembled, one-of-a-kind, battery-powered radio tower!" They all looked up at him, Mike nodding and looking kind of impressed since Jane taught him about technology.

"So...it's a ham radio," Will stated.

"The Cadillac of ham radios." He looked down at his creation. "This baby right here carries a crystal-clear connection over long distances." He looked up at his friends again. "I'm talking from the North Pole to the South!" He put his hand on it. "I can talk to my girlfriend whenever and wherever I choose."

All of them looked shocked when he dropped that word. "Girlfriend?!" they all exclaimed. He nodded, grinning.

...

As they all began to leave with parts of Cerebro, Will asked, "Her name is Suzie?"

"Yup," the curly-haired boy answered. "With a 'z'. She's from Utah."

"I didn't know other girls go to science camp," Jane said.

He looked back at her for a bit. "Suzie does. She's a genius!"

"What does she look like?"

"Think of Phoebe Cates, but hotter." The tomboy gave him a skeptical look.

"Phoebe Cates?" Mike asked.

Jane looked up at him. "That girl from Gremlins."

He nodded, remembering her. "Oh."

As they were getting out the door, Max and Lucas, who was still washing his eyes, looked puzzled. "What's going on?" the red-haired girl asked.

Will smirked at them and answered, "We're going to talk to Dustin's girlfriend."

That was so shocking to them, even Lucas stopped washing his eyes and exclaimed with Max, "GIRLFRIEND?!"

---

In "Scoops Ahoy!", Steve plopped one scoop of chocolate ice cream on a cone and gave it to a girl with big, curly hair. She was next to another with stylized bangs and a ponytail, licking her orange sherbet. "Alrighty, one scoop of chocolate ice cream is a buck twenty-five," he said to her. The girl reached down her purse to get that money. Once she gave it to him, he managed the cash register with it. The two girls then noticed the ring the stain was, looking weirded out. He looked up at them and asked, "What?"

"Your uniform has some kind of...ring on it," the girl with the curly hair said.

He tried, but failed to hide his shocked expression. He THOUGHT he'd wash out every inch of the stain. He then laughed and tried to be coy. "Ah, that, well, uh..." He began thinking of a lie, leaning against the counter. "Y'know, my cousin's, like, visiting for the summer and he's like, super young, like 6." The girl with the ponytail looked amused while the curly-haired one looked confused. "He always pulls these stupid pranks all the time, so he's pretty much decided, 'Hey, let's screw up Steve's uniform!'" He laughed, only getting nervous chuckles from the two girls. "But, uh, yeah, he stained my uniform with, uh, orange juice and I tried to wash it out and-"

While he was bullshitting away, the girl he bumped into earlier, now in a new set of clothes, angrily stormed in the parlor. The two girls looked back and got the hell out of her way, having her in front of



Steve. He didn't recognize her right away, so he asked plainly, "Ahoy...how can I help-" Without a second to react, the girl slapped him, loud enough to get the attention of the entire parlor. The two girls' jaws dropped in amusement. Robin opened the window to see what was going on.

"That's for spilling your coffee on me this morning, STEVE HARRINGTON!" she yelled at him before she turned her heel and began storming right out.

Another screw-up today was the last thing he needed, so he tried to salvage it by yelling, "Come on! It was an accident!" She didn't react to that in any way as she reached to the entrance. "I can make it up to you, uh, what's your name?!" She was gone when he asked, making him sigh deeply.

Everyone in the parlor looked at him funny. Robin was grinning and holding in a laugh before disappearing to get something. Steve looked at everyone and gave them a half-assed smile. The two girls he served began laughing before walking away and everyone else resumed what they were doing before, a few kids laughing. He sighed deeply again, knowing that was his second embarrassing screw-up today.

"And that was another embarrassing moment in Steve Harrington's history," Robin said dramatically yet dryly. He looked back to see his coworker pull out a board. It had a drawn chart separated by two categories: "YOU RULE" and "YOU SUCK". There were plenty of ticks on the "YOU SUCK" side and she added another one with a marker. "You are oh-to-six, Popeye."

He scoffed, leaning against the counter with his arms crossed. "Yeah, I can count," he replied.

"You know that mean you suck?"

He nodded and gave her a half-assed smile. "Yup, I can read too."

She pretended to look surprised. "Since when? When your junior girlfriend helped you ace your senior exams?"

"Ha ha ha." She slid the board away as he walked towards her. "Thanks for making me feel worse."

She smiled at him ironically. "You're welcome."

If he didn't know any better, he would snap at her. Thankfully, he wasn't at that breaking point yet. He could only draw his lips to a fine line and bite the lower one. The freckled female raised her eyebrows at him, looking amused. His pain was her enjoyment, ever since day one of this stupid job...

He huffed and looked her dead in the eye, asking, "Can you cover for me?"

She chuckled, looking at his uniform. "I'm sure that ring's gonna be stuck there, no matter how much soap and water you scrub it with."

He sharply inhaled and muttered to himself, "I hate this job."

She nodded a little. "Me too, buckeroo."

He glared at her again. "No, you don't." She looked at him weird.

"What?"

He leaned closer to her, looking like he's taking no bullshit. She looked a little concerned. "Listen, were you denied into coming to Tech and do you have a douchebag dad trying to teach you a lesson by getting stuck at a lousy job that pays three bucks an hour, meaning you have no future?" She opened her mouth to respond, but he kept going, "Oh, and did you ALSO get denied a slightly better job your girlfriend-" He paused for a bit. "Or in your case, boyfriend-" She widened her eyes and raised an eyebrow. "-is working at and that just only solidifies why you have no future?" She looked like she was at a loss for words, Steve looking oh-so-impatient with everything.

Suddenly, the bell rung and he tried to be the happy, cheery cashier he was supposed to be. "AHOY!" he greeted so loud that it nearly scared the group of girls that entered. "How can I help you ladies today?!" Why was he so unnecessarily loud? Now he weirded out the group of girls.

Robin shook her head and sighed, walking back to the board. She knew her coworker had problems, but she had no idea he'd have PROBLEMS. With that thought, she drew another tick on the "YOU SUCK" side.

---

"I know...that this is a difficult conversation to have, Mike," Hopper said, reciting some lines Joyce and Terry made for him. He sat across from Joyce as practice for the real thing. "But I hope you know that...I care about you very much. You and...Jane. And I know you-"

Joyce interrupted him by gesturing eye-contact. "C'mon, keep eye-contact," she told him.

He sighed, looked her in the eye, tried not to blush, and continued, "And I know you both care about each other very much." He stopped and shook his head. "That does not sound like me at all."

"Just keep going, Jim," Terry encouraged.

He took a deep breath and looked at Joyce again, leaning back on the chair he was sitting in. "Which is why Terry and I talked and think it's important to set some boundaries..." He looked like he was lost. "...moving forward..." He looked down at the paper Joyce wrote on.

"Come on, no looking, you got this," the brunette woman said encouragingly.

He inhaled sharply and looked at her again, folding the paper. "So we can build an environment'...uh..." The woman gestured him to keep going. "...where we all feel comfortable...and trusted...and open..."

Terry mouthed to him, "Sharing our feelings..."

"...to sharing our feelings-" He stopped and stood up, frustrated. "This isn't gonna work. It'll never work. It won't work." He walked towards Joyce and sat next to her on the counter.

The brunette woman still gave him an encouraging look, telling him, "It'll work! Trust me!"

Terry gave him an encouraging smile. "I'm going to have the same talk with Jane, Jim. If I can pull through with it, so will you."

"You got this." Joyce then held his hand. He looked down at it, then at her, the two looking at each other for more than several seconds.

Terry felt awkward, considering that she and Hopper had kissed before and were thinking about being together, so she began walking away. "Anyway, you two can continue practicing. I need to go to the pool to cool down." She pointed at Jim. "Get Jane home by 7 so we can talk, okay?"

He nodded at her, Joyce flashing her a smile. "I'll see you later, Terry!"

She waved them goodbye, but then stopped in her tracks when she remembered something. "Oh yeah, I almost forgot." She turned to see a curious Joyce and Jim. "Becky and Carl and Tina are going to visit for the week."

Her friend's face lit up, but then she became confused. Hopper was too. "Tina?"

Terry felt stupid for not breaking the news to Joyce. "Oh my God, I forgot to tell you. Tina's my new niece."

She gasped, looking happy. "Congratulations! How old is she?"

"Five weeks."

"Awww~, I can't wait to see her!"

Terry flashed a smile at her. "Me too!" Hopper looked and felt left out, the awkwardness making the return. Terry decided to just walk out and wave to the both of them, saying, "I'll see you guys later!" They both waved her goodbye before she left the store.

She released a sigh of relief. Any more time in there would just make her feel worse. She got into her car and started it up, driving away to the pool. Though it was always crowded and noisy, it was a nice change of pace from her work and her shopping. Plus, she had nothing more to do at home than to read and watch T.V., so the pool

was a lot more fun.

---

The Party was walking up the hill, most of them carrying the supplies for Cerebro. Mike and Jane didn't carry any of it though, holding hands instead. "Isn't this high enough?" Lucas asked.

"Nah, Cerebro works best at a hundred meters," Dustin answered.

While the rest of the party were talking about Cerebro and Suzie, Jane tugged Mike's hand a little, making him look down at her. She smiled and gestured him to lean down to her. He did, smiling as well, and she whispered into his ear, "Do you wanna go now?"

He did want to go back home and kiss her more, but then he whispered back to her, "Cerebro sounds interesting though."

She pouted at him. "Assembling it won't be fun."

"But I'll assemble it with you."

"Mike, which is more fun? Assembling that thing in this burning heat? Or going back to the cabin to hang out, just the two of us?" To be honest with himself, hanging out with Jane seemed more fun than with the rest of the group. Plus, it WAS hot out.

"Let's go back." She smiled and kissed him on the cheek.

"Hey, guys!" the tomboy called out to the rest of the kids. They stopped and looked at her. "This has been really fun and all, but..." She pointed at the watch she was wearing.

"I have to go home," Mike stated.

Dustin looked surprised, pointing at the top of the hill. "But we're almost there."

"Sorry," Jane replied. "It's his curfew."

"Good luck though!" The tomboy then dragged her boyfriend away, the two smiling and laughing with each other as they went down the hill.

Dustin checked his watch, then looked puzzled at the couple. "Curfew at 4?"

Lucas looked disappointed. "They're lying."

Will looked disappointed as well as annoyed. "They've been doing this all summer."

"It's romantic," Max said.

"It's annoying," Will replied in a tone that matched his expression.

"It's bullshit!" Dustin added, looking disappointed as well. "I just got home." They all watched the young couple run down the hill, enjoying each other's company. "Well, it's their loss." He then smiled and nodded up the hill. "Onwards and upwards!" He, Lucas, and Max continued to get up the hill, but Will looked at the couple intently, exhaling deeply.

He swore, ever since he came back last year, Jane always had her attention towards Mike. Mike, Mike, Mike, it's all about Mike. Sure, he saved Will when he communicated with him in the Upside Down and he apologized for throwing him halfway across the school hallway after trying to ask Jane out to the Snow Ball. But...he clings onto her like Gollum with the Ring. And it wasn't long before she started clinging to him too and leaving to be with him. It was like Jane was a completely different person when she's with Mike.

Maybe if they hadn't met, she would still be the girl he fell in love-

No, no, he was still trying to get over that damn crush he had on her since kindergarten. But even so, he thought that Mike was a bad influence on her...

Dustin, Lucas, and Max saw him just standing there and watching the couple leave, frowning. "He's still not over it?" Dustin asked his friends.

Lucas shook his head. "He gets annoyed every time she talks about him and he never looks happy when they're together."

"I hope he does get over it soon," Max said in a caring voice.

"Clinging on your crush for that long is not healthy."

"True. He'll find his Suzie, sooner or later," Dustin said before shouting, "Hey, Will!" The auburn-haired boy broke out of his thoughts and looked up at his friends. "C'mon, we're almost there."

"Okay!" he replied loudly, his friends ascending up the hill again. He sighed and began to ascend up the hill as well...then he felt the chill from the back of his neck again. He touched the back of it, looking worried. He looked around to see what was making him feel this way. It was twice he felt that...why?

He decided to let it go at the moment and continue going up the hill with the rest of his friends.

---

Terry, now dressed in a blue, magenta, teal, and orange one-piece swimsuit and brown aviator sunglasses, was laying on one of the chairs, drinking the lemonade she purchased and resting under the shade of the umbrella near her. Adults and children alike were playing in the pool. Maybe she could go for a swim. It wouldn't be of any harm to her.

She finished her lemonade, left her sunglasses in her bag, and stood up, walking towards the pool. Suddenly, a whistle was blown by one of the lifeguards...which was Max's step-brother, Billy Hargrove. "HEY!" he shouted, making her stiff. "Lard-ass!" Everyone was still before looking at an overweight boy. "No running on my watch! I gotta warn you again, you're banned for life, understand?!" The boy nodded, then he blew his whistle and the pool was lively again.

The dirty-blonde-haired woman saw him talking to some women around her age or a little older rather flirtatiously. She sighed and shook her head. That kid always gave her a bad feeling, never mind his behavior. How he became lifeguard was beyond her-

"Watch out!" shouted a man's voice. She broke out of her thoughts to see a beach ball coming her way. She caught it with her hands before it could hit her. She heard someone swim to her. "Nice catch!"

She got the beach ball out of her sight, lowering it. "Uh, thanks!" She

then looked down to see a Caucasian man with wet, long brown hair, and brown eyes. He had some facial hair and around Terry's age. The both of them had surprised looks on their faces when they looked at each other. The woman crouched down and asked, "Andrew?"

His face lit up and he had the biggest smile on his face. "Terry!" he proclaimed happily. "It's been a while."

She nervously smiled. "It has..."

"Wait, Andrew, you know Terry?" asked a female's voice. A Caucasian woman with wet, curly, black hair and green eyes was swimming towards them.

Terry looked surprised to see the woman too. "Stacey?" she asked.

Andrew looked surprised too. "YOU know Terry, Stace?"

She laughed. "She's my co-worker, at the Gap." Those two women were really the only older women working in that store, so they've bonded a little. "How do YOU know her?"

"Uh..." He looked like he was looking for the right words to say since...well...

They knew each other when Terry was working her "night shift".

"You know that job I quit last year?" Stacey nodded. "She used to work there, but quit way before."

She raised her eyebrows. "Oh..." She looked at Terry. "Well damn, if I'd known you worked with this guy before..." She playfully pushed him, making him laugh.

Terry nervously laughed. "Well..." She gave them the beach ball. "I believe this is yours."

Andrew grabbed it and flashed her a smile. "It's Dave's, actually."

She looked puzzled. "Dave's?"

"Okay, what the hell's going on here?" a different guy asked, who just



appeared next to Andrew and Stacey. He had short, dirty-blond hair and brown eyes.

"Ah, right." The long-haired guy motioned his hand between the man and Terry. "Dave, this is my old coworker, Terry. Terry, this is my best friend, Dave."

Dave smiled at her and held out his wet hand. "Hey, Terry."

She shook his hand, though she felt a chill because the water was cold on her hot skin. "Hey."

"You should join us!" Stacey suggested. "It'll be fun!"

"And we'll actually hang out, like friends!" Andrew added. "Plus, we'll relax and probably play 20 Questions with you."

She raised an eyebrow. "20 Questions?"

"Come on, already!" He then grabbed her arm and pulled her into the water, her screaming as she submerged in there. Dave and Stacey were out of the way, laughing. She got up and gasped for some air, grinning at them and splashing Andrew. He laughed and splashed her back. They all then swam to an open area to play with their beach ball. The idea for a nice swim flew right out the window and she decided to have fun with these people. For once, she actually decided to have fun with a group of people.

Never has she done this before...and she was glad she did.

---

**Stopping right here. What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**For the conversation in Melvald's, I wanted to bring in two points of view: Hopper being the one against the relationship as he was in canon and Terry supporting it because she took care of the two kids and wants the best for them. Of course Joyce is in the middle.**

**I did change up Hopper's behavior quite a bit though...and that's because I think he was WAY too toxic this season that he was a**

completely different character than what was shown in his letter at the end. So yeah, expect some changes with his reactions and his interactions with everyone else, ESPECIALLY Joyce. In this AU, since he's Mike's adoptive dad, his motivation for him and Jane separating would be different and more personal this time. It does seem right to me, given the things he's been through and all.

Not only is Kali facing sexism in the workplace, but also racism, hence the nickname "Curry Kali". I'm sure women of color faced the same thing back in the day, so yeah.

Poor Steve...if I only I could make him happy sooner...poor Will too, especially since he's IN LOVE with Jane...

So...I decided to pull out three characters from Suspicious Minds into this AU. Andrew Rich, Terry's boyfriend in the book, will be her love interest here! Stacey was her roommate, so she'll be her coworker, and Dave's still gonna be Andrew's best friend. They're all friends living together in this AU and they'll be Terry's new friends! Though...like this season's tagline says, one summer can change everything. Stacey and Dave's personalities aren't that fleshed out in the book, so I'll have a blast making them in this AU! As for Andrew, I'll try my best to make him the chill and supportive guy he was in the book!

Here's some visual aids on those three:

Andrew (remove spaces and add actual dot com): [i. yting vi \(dot com\) / 2r6ewUPEOaA / maxresdefault. jpg](https://i.ytimg.com/vi/2r6ewUPEOaA/maxresdefault.jpg)

For Stacey, just look up Jennifer Connelly and just imagine her with curly hair.

Dave (remove spaces and add actual dot com): [www. pccheatz \(dot com\) / wp-content / uploads / 2018 / 09 / awesome-suggestion-of-hair-plus-mens-hairstyles-for-fine-straight-hair-of-special-hair-cut-plus-fine-thin-hairstyles. jpg](http://www.pccheatz.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/awesome-suggestion-of-hair-plus-mens-hairstyles-for-fine-straight-hair-of-special-hair-cut-plus-fine-thin-hairstyles.jpg)

Review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!

## 55. What Is It?

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

In the late afternoon, the door to the Ives home opened, Becky being the first one to walk in. Her hair was still short like before, but in a ponytail now. She wore a sleeveless white and orange shirt, denim jeans, socks, and white sneakers. She had her daughter, Tina, in her arms. She wore a pink and white onesie with a sewn-in flower on the front. She took mostly from her mother, but had her father's blue eyes. Her dirty-blond hair had a pink bow on top of it. Carl came in after, his dark hair in a more corporate cut. He wore a white collared shirt, gray slacks, and black shoes.

"Terry~, we're here~!" Becky sang. There was no answer as Carl placed the luggage in the living room and went out to get the rest. Becky looked curious and asked, "Terry?" Still no answer.

"Is she here?" Carl asked, bringing in the luggage for Tina.

She shook her head. "She hasn't answered." Her husband stood next to her, placing Tina's luggage with their own. "I'm guessing she's out shoppin'."

He nodded and placed a hand on her shoulder. "Probably. Let's get settled in." She nodded back before Carl went out to get Tina's booster chair.

The baby girl made some cooing sounds, making her mother smile and stroke her small hand. "Yes~, this is your auntie's home~," she said to her in a singsong voice. "Yes, it is big~." She knew her little girl knew nothing, but it was still fun to play with and talk to her the way she did, just like she did with Jane when she was just a baby.

As she got into the kitchen, she noticed the magnets and papers on the floor. "Oh, well then," she said to herself, holding Tina with one arm before picking up the magnets and papers they probably were hanging up. When she was finishing, she saw that Terry's schedule was on the floor as well. She looked at this day, which was Saturday.

She saw that she planned to be at the pool until 6. She grinned. "Well, decided to go out and have fun by yourself, huh?"

"Becky!" called out her husband from the living room.

She looked back at him and replied, "Coming!" She put the schedule up and stood up, holding her daughter with both of her arms again.

---

"You have kids?" Dave asked Terry. The four of them were out of the pool and sitting at a shaded table, draped with towels. Terry had her bag near her.

"Yeah," she answered, nodding. "One adopted, the other my own. Both are girls."

"Wow. I don't even like kids."

"Honestly, me neither," Stacey added, drinking the beer she hid in a Coke can. "That's why I'm not married."

Terry's face dropped before Andrew looked at his two friends disapprovingly. "Come on, guys. Show a little respect." They both looked apologetic, shrugging.

She smiled at him and said, "Thanks."

"You're single though?" Dave asked.

She nodded. "Yes, ever since my biological daughter was 2."

"How old is she now?" Andrew asked.

"14."

"Damn," Stacey said in surprise. "I didn't know you were single for THAT long!" Terry laughed at that statement.

Andrew looked at her. "Time flies, you know? One minute, you're in school, trying to pass..."

"Then the next, you're at home, trying to take care of two kids,

wondering where the time went," Terry finished for him.

He grinned at her. "For me, it's the fact that I suddenly got long hair and a van to sleep in, so yeah, time went pretty quick for me." Then the two laughed.

Stacey and Dave looked at the two of them with grins on their faces. "Well, maybe you won't be single for long..." Stacey said in a subtle mischievous tone.

The two looked a bit puzzled before the long-haired guy rolled his eyes. "Stacey-"

"Maybe the right man is right next to you all along," Dave said in an obvious mischievous voice, wagging his eyebrows.

She gasped and blushed a little, looking at Andrew for a second before looking back at the two other adults. "No, no, we JUST met," she answered, the two raising their eyebrows. "After a long time," she corrected herself.

"Yeah, just because we get along doesn't mean we'll get together," Andrew added, looking annoyed while grinning. "Otherwise, Stacey and I would've gotten together at some point." The woman mentioned rolled her eyes and continued drinking her hidden beer.

Dave laughed. "Yeah, true. That'd be weird." Andrew nodded and threw his hand up at him, showcasing that it was the point.

Stacey began eyeing Billy for a bit, then put down her can. "I'll be right back," she told everyone as she stood up. "Protect my drink." She then walked to Billy, Dave sighing.

"I swear, she's always trying with that kid," Dave muttered.

"Oh really?" Andrew asked, making Terry curious.

"Yeah, she always comes to talk to him whenever he's alone. She's not the only one though." He moved his head towards the woman Terry saw him flirt with, still staring at him. "He's the flirt of the pool, I tell ya."

The long-haired man shrugged. "He looks like it." He noticed that Terry hasn't said anything, so he looked at her and asked, "Right, Terry?"

She sighed. "He's actually the stepbrother of one of my young daughter's friends."

Both men looked both amused and surprised to hear that. "No way," Dave said.

She nodded. "I don't know him that well, but he never struck right with me."

"I don't blame you," Andrew said, eyeing Billy as he said something to make Stacey laugh. "He looks like trouble."

"And that's Stacey's type, apparently," Dave chimed in, shrugging.

Terry decided to look at the sun, seeing that it was setting. She gasped and stood up. "Oh my God."

The two men looked curious. "What?" they both asked.

"I should be getting home now. I need to fix my daughters some dinner."

They nodded in understanding, but before she left, Andrew said, "Hey." She stopped and turned to him. "I'm visiting these guys, so I'm gonna be in this town for the next week. It was nice talking to you again."

She smiled at him and replied, "I feel the same. I'll see you around!" With that, she left.

Andrew was still as great as he was back when she was working her "night shift". His friends seemed...interesting, Stacey a little more..."interesting". But still, she never expected to see him again after quitting her "night shift". It was really great that she got to talk to him again. And he'll still be here for the next week, so...

---

Hawkins Post was mostly empty, save for Kali and Jonathan. With

cleaning gloves on, she threw the wrappers and leftovers the men left in the garbage can, mumbling curses about them. Jonathan was still around so that he could drop her off at her home. He was worried about her acting like this, so he said, "Kali, calm down."

"I'm not kicking the chairs, am I?" she retorted.

"No, but-

"Then I'm calm." She then aggressively threw a wrapper in the trash.

He scoffed. "Mumbling and throwing the trash like that isn't what a calm person would do."

She stopped throwing the trash away and glared at him. "Oh, I'm sorry for being treated like shit."

He looked at her worriedly. "You know that's not what I meant." She sighed and continued throwing the wrappers away. "They'll like you-

She scoffed. "They already like me as their little slave that they can order around and deliver food and clean up their shit-

"Kal-

"-so, instead of treating me like an actual human being, I'm their willing Indian servant."

"Kali-

"But they like YOU-" She paused to point at him. "-well enough, so that's all fine and dandy for you!"

"KALI!" She looked at him sharply, not throwing away the trash again. "Listen, I know they're set in their ways-

"Their racist, misogynistic ways."

He sighed. "But once they see that you're a gifted writer, they'll come around. You just have to be patient."

Maybe...maybe they would. But maybe Jonathan should stop telling

her that every time she vents out to him. "Well, my patience is wearing thin, Jonathan." He looked defeated as she threw a half-eaten sandwich on a wrapper into the trash. What else could he say to her to make her calm down?

Suddenly, the phone began to ring, the two looking at it. It continued ringing, making Kali think of something. She put down the trash can and removed her gloves, throwing them in there. Jonathan looked concerned. "Kal, what are you doing?" She ignored him and walked to the phone, making him follow in concern. "Wait, Kal-"

She picked up and greeted, "Hawkins Post, how may I help you?" He shook his head and looked away, wandering around. She heard an old woman talk about something that made her eyes widen. "I'm sorry, hold on." She then grabbed the nearest notepad and pen, clicking it. The auburn-haired guy looked at her curiously. "What did you say your name was again?" When the woman answered, she wrote down:

*Doris Driscoll*

Jonathan began to walk to his friend as she asked, "What's your address?" She then wrote:

*4819 Cornwallis Road*

"What the hell are you doing, Kal?" he whispered to her.

"And...you said something about rats?" she asked Doris, ignoring him. The woman spoke, then finally, she wrote down:

*Rats...with Disease?*

The two looked shocked at that. What the hell could that mean...? Kali continued listening to what Doris had to say.

---

The radio in Mike's room began playing "Can't Fight This Feeling" by REO Speedwagon. While it was playing, Jane and Mike were constantly kissing. She pulled him close, then cupped his face with both of her hands as he wrapped his arms around her back.



...

While that was happening, Hopper was reciting the heart-to-heart he finally made for Mike. He was smoking while doing it. "...which is why Terry and I talked and think it's important to set some boundaries..." He paused, trying to remember what comes next. "...moving forward, so we can create an environment where..." He paused again. "...we all feel comfortable and trusted and open..." He forgot the rest, him muttering, "Shit." He looked at the heart-to-heart on the piece of paper. "...to sharing our feelings."

He sighed heavily. To be honest with himself, he felt very nervous about having this "heart-to-heart" with Mike. Yeah, Terry's gonna do the same with Jane, but it didn't alleviate anything. He just needed to stay calm and go through with this...but how could he? Smoking wasn't working.

He looked at his alarm clock, seeing that it was ten minutes before 7. He got up immediately. "Shit!" He went to the curtains to his bedroom and opened them up. He smoked one last time before throwing the cigarette in the trash. He took a deep breath before getting near the doorway to Mike's room. He folded and put the speech into the pocket of his policeman shirt before knocking the on the door. "Hey, kids?"

"Yeah?" they both answered as he heard them move around on the boy's bed.

He sighed and stated, "I need to take Jane home."

...

Inside, Jane sat criss-crossed on the middle of the bed while Mike sat up against the wall, the two looking puzzled. "Why?" asked the girl in question.

...

"Your, uh...your mom called."

...

The two lovebirds continued to look puzzled as they looked at each other. "Did you hear the phone?"

The freckled boy shook his head. "No."

She grinned and whispered to him, "Maybe he's just grumpy about us having fun and not him." That made him snicker.

...

Jim didn't have the patience for another answer, so he just stormed into the room, making the two tense up. He sighed deeply and looked at the girl. "Let's go, Jane, your mom needs you." He began to leave, but didn't hear the tomboy follow suit. He turned to her sternly and said a little louder, "Let's...GO!" Looking nervous, she got off of the bed and waved to Mike.

"I'll see you tomorrow morning!" she said to him.

He waved back and replied, "Tomorrow morning!"

Hopper shook his head as he went out the door. "That's not gonna happen," he muttered under his breath.

Jane went out with him and closed the door, confused. "Wait, what?" He didn't answer her and continued walking to his car. "What did you say?" He still didn't answer. She looked pretty annoyed, throwing her arms up. "Hopper, come on! Does Mama really need me? Or-"

The two of them got to his car as he finally answered, "What do you think, kid?" She glared at him before remembering the conversation her mother had with him on the phone, her eyes widened. They both then got into the car and buckled up.

"What did you guys talk about...?" He started the car and began to drive away. "Me and Mike?"

"Yeah," he finally answered, again, getting out of the woods and into the road. "You heard her over the phone this morning, didn't ya?"

She actually looked pretty nervous, nodding a little. "Yeah..."

"Then you know what's gonna happen."

She looked a little puzzled and concerned. "But I don't." He merely scoffed at that, feeling annoyed and making her sigh. "Come on, tell me what's going to happen."

"Ask your mom that, not me-"

"But Mama talked to you, right? Couldn't you tell me what she-"

And that was the moment Jim blew his fuse by yelling, "WILL YOU BE QUIET FOR FIVE MINUTES?!" She looked pretty scared and tense now, her fists balled tight. He sighed once more and shook his head. "We're just gonna do something about you and Mike, okay? This...THING you two are having is WRONG and we're just gonna do something about it, okay?" She gulped. He looked annoyed that she didn't respond, so he asked loudly, "O-KAY?" She nodded her head quickly, intimidated by Jim. Nothing more was said on the way home.

---

In her and Dave's home, Stacey was in the bathroom, looking fresh out of the shower with her wet hair and towel wrapped around her body. She was drying her hair with the blowdryer, her makeup kit lying near the faucet of the sink. On top of the closed laundry bin was a bright red, short-sleeved dress. She had just gotten herself a..."private swimming lesson" with the young and hot Billy Hargrove. She honestly felt a little nervous, but she thought that once they were there at Motel 6, it will all go away.

...

While she was getting ready, Andrew and Dave were sitting on a couch and watching the news, seeing that NASA has launched another satellite into orbit. "We're doing well in the space business, aren't we?" the long-haired man said to his friend.

"Yeah, I'm sure we're kicking the commies' asses," he replied, the two laughing afterwards.

After a bit, Andrew looked at the hallway to the bathroom and asked,

"You know when Stacey's coming outta there?"

He shrugged. "She always takes long to prepare for a date. All women do."

"No, they don't." Dave gave him a suspicious look, making him nervously laugh. "Not saying that I've dated around a lot..."

He merely nodded at his friend. "Uh-huh..."

Andrew shook his head and looked at the TV. "But all women are different, just like all of us men."

"Well, I wish Stacey wasn't like every other woman." He chuckled, then Andrew gave him a raised eyebrow in disapproval. He sighed and sunk back in his chair. "Dude, I'm just joking around."

He nodded. "I know, you're just not a good comedian." Dave flipped him off, making him laugh.

"And speaking of women..." The dirty-blond-haired guy grinned and leaned a little towards his friend. "Terry."

Andrew looked a bit suspicious. "Yeah, what about her?"

"She seems nice."

He nodded, smiling. "Oh, she still is."

Dave raised his eyebrows. "You said that rather dreamily."

Andrew scoffed and shook his head at him. "I'm just saying, she was as nice as she was back when we had our former job."

Dave mischievously grinned. "You told me she was cute."

He glared at him, blushing just a little. "Once, Dave, once."

"Once is enough, man." He pointed a wagging finger at him. "And you didn't deny it, so..."

The long-haired man sighed and leaned back against the couch. "Okay, so what if I still find her cute? So what if I still like her? What

of it?"

His friend looked like he was joking. "You could ask her out, Andrew. You two get along well enough."

He looked at him with narrow eyes. "It's been less than a day, Dave."

He held his hands up. "I'm not saying you should take her out on a DATE or anything." He put his hands down and looked at him once again. "Just ask her to go somewhere at some time and you two can talk. That's all." A day-out with her, huh? It didn't sound like a bad idea, but...

"What if she denies it? What if she's busy?"

He shrugged. "You got the rest of the week." He was rebut that, but he was right. He did get the rest of the week...even so...

"I don't wanna seem pushy, dude."

He raised his hands up again. "If you don't wanna give you and her a shot, that's your choice, man." He relaxed back into the chair, watching a commercial for a store. "I just think you deserve to have one more friend than just me and Stacey." Andrew's light-hearted face dropped. "And you should let loose a lot more often."

The long-haired man just sighed and continued watching TV with his friend. He did like Terry and he'd like to get to know her a little better. Maybe it wouldn't hurt to ask her out-to talk like friends, that is. He didn't want to jump from friendship to relationship after less than a damn day. It'll be another way to loosen up more due to...a big unfortunate instance in his life. Hanging out with Dave and Stacey was just one way of loosening up. Maybe hanging out with Terry would help him a lot more.

As they continued watching TV, Stacey got out. She was dressed in her bright red dress, had her purse slung around her shoulder, had a face full of makeup, and had her curly hair fluffed out, looking well-kept. The guys raised their eyebrows at the sight of her. "You're gonna knock 'em dead, Stace," Dave said.

"Yeah, you look great," Andrew added.

She smiled at the both of them and replied, "Thanks." As she began to exit, she turned to the guys and said, "Don't get into any trouble while I'm gone."

"Don't get into any trouble with your date," Andrew retorted. She laughed ironically before finally leaving the home. "I hope that kid treats her well."

"We'll know what to do if he doesn't," Dave said.

He nodded. "Yeah."

---

"You made new friends at the pool?" Becky asked Terry. The two were in the bathroom, Terry drying her hair with a blow-dryer while wearing her night gown.

"Yeah," she answered. "One of them's a coworker from the Gap, another a..." She nearly said "Ex-coworker", but she knew she couldn't drop that. "...an old patron from Hideaway..." Becky nodded in interest. "And the last one's a friend of that patron."

She smiled. "Aaaah, so you've caught up with old friends."

"You could say that." She turned off the blow-dryer and set it on the hanging basket near the sink, fixing up her hair with her fingers.

"They got names, right?"

Terry laughed. "Stacey, Andrew, and Dave."

"The coworker, ex-patron, and his buddy."

She nodded. "Correct."

She smiled at her again. "Well, I'm glad you're breaking outta your shell, Terry. I mean, your only friends shouldn't be just me and Joyce." They both laughed together.

"You guys are STILL my friends!"

"Didn't saw we weren't!"

She sighed and continued smiling, looking straight at her sister. "But I had fun and they were great people, especially Andrew." Becky got a mischievous grin on her face, raising an eyebrow. Terry knew that look and scoffed. "No, Becky." She then began to leave the bathroom, her sister following.

"C'mooooon..."

"You were wrong about Jim-"

"Which was one guy."

She stopped at the top of the stairwell and turned to her. "We haven't seen each other for nearly two years, Becky. If you think I would instantly fall in love with a guy I HAVEN'T SEEN in nearly TWO YEARS like I'm in some cheesy romance movie-"

The short-haired woman held her hands up in surrender. "Okay, okay, you win."

The long-haired woman sighed in relief. "Thank you." And just in the nick of time, the doorbell rung, the two women looking down at the door. "I think that's them." She descended down the stairs to get the door.

Becky did the same. "Jane and Jim?"

"Yeah."

She nodded and got down the stairs with her. Terry had told her while she was drying her hair that she was going to talk to Jane about her boyfriend, Mike, who was Jim's kid, much to her surprise. She went to Carl and Tina, the man holding the baby, who were watching TV while something was cooking in the kitchen. She sat down next to them as Terry opened the door. Much to her surprise, she just saw Jane at the doorstep and Hopper just driving off. She watched Jim just drive away, leaving her confused.

"Mama?" Jane asked, making the woman look down at her.

"Yes, Jane?"

"Hopper, uh...said that you and him are gonna do something about me and Mike."

She nodded and let her daughter in, closing the door and leading her to the kitchen. "Yes, we're going to have a talk after dinner."

She looked puzzled. "But Mike isn't here."

"Hopper will talk to Mike, I'll talk to you."

Her eyes widened in surprise. "Oh..."

---

Hopper had driven away from the Ives home and had finally arrived back at the cabin. He gave the door the special knock, then Mike opened it with his powers. He went inside and closed the door behind him, seeing the boy watching TV with a comic Jane gave him next to him. He felt the nervous he had amplify, awkwardly staring at him. The boy looked concerned. "Are you okay?" he asked him.

"Uh, yeah, yeah, of course I am," he lied, walking towards him slowly.

"What did Terry need Jane for?"

He didn't answer as he sat right next to his son. "Something...can you turn off the TV?" Mike tilted his head towards the TV to switch it off, not keeping his eyes off of his adoptive father.

"What is it?"

---

After dinner, the two females went up to Jane's room. Terry pulled up a chair in front of Jane's bed, the girl sitting on there, criss-crossed. The woman sat on the chair and looked at Jane straight in the eye. "Now, Jane..."

---

"I...wanted to talk to you about...something," Hopper finally said after seconds of silence.

Mike looked puzzled. "Talk about what?"



---

"This doesn't mean that you and Mike are in trouble, alright?" Jane nodded, though that wasn't the vibe she got from Hopper on the way back home. "We both know how much you two care about each other." She held her daughter's hands, giving her a reassuring smile. "We also care about you two as well."

The tomboy looked a little skeptical. "Even Hopper?"

She nodded. "Even Hopper."

---

"I...uh..." Goddamn it, Hopper thought he was prepared. It was Jane asking all those questions on the way home, he swore. "What I wanted to talk about is..." Mike raised an eyebrow, looking curious.

---

"Hopper and I have talked this morning, as you know, and we both agreed..." Terry took a deep breath. "...that we should set some boundaries, moving forward."

She looked at her weird. "Boundaries?"

---

Hopper rubbed his mustache, looking away from Mike. "What I needed to say to you is..." The freckled boy ducked his head down, now looking impatient.

"Is...?" the boy asked.

---

"Hopper and I want you and Mike to help us build an open and comfortable environment where we are open to sharing our feelings. Does that make sense?" The brown-haired girl nodded, making her mother nod back. "Good."

---

Mike suddenly looked worried. "Is something wrong?" he asked his adoptive father.

He looked at him and shook his head. "Oh no!" he replied. "Nooooooooo, nothing's...wrong." Or was it? "Um...so..."

---

"Here's what I'm thinking: you call Mike tomorrow and tell him that you won't be hanging out with him that day."

Jane's eyes widened. "What?!"

Terry held up her hands, gesturing her to calm down. "I'm sure that after Hopper has his talk with him, he'll definitely understand. In fact, Hopper might ask the same of Mike right now."

---

"Uh..."

Mike narrowed his eyes at him. "You're acting really weird, Pop."

He scoffed and muttered under his breath, "Shit, is it that obvious?"

"What?"

He instantly looked at his son, trying to look coy. "Nothing! Nothing..." He rubbed his face in frustration, knowing damn well that he was screwing up.

---

"Okay...so I call Mike and we won't see each other tomorrow?" Jane asked, Terry nodding.

"Mmm-hmm."

"But then what do I do?"

She shrugged. "You can hang out with the boys, or even Max. Hanging out with just Max is a nice change of pace from the boys." Jane pursed her lips, uncomfortable with that suggestion since she's known the rest of the boys for a long time. "Or you can hang out with your Aunt Becky, Uncle Carl, and Tina. It's all up to you, in the end."

The tomboy looked away from her mom and frowned. "But what could Mike do...?"

"Hey..." The dirty-blond-haired woman grabbed and stroked her daughter's arm for comfort. "I'm sure Hopper will have something

planned for him."

She looked at her. "Are you sure?"

She nodded. "I'm sure."

---

"What I wanted to talk to you about..." He paused. "...is..."

"Didn't you say that before?"

Damn it, did he?

---

Jane nodded and sighed. "Okay, Mama. I'll do what you say tomorrow."

Terry smiled and held her daughter's hands again. "Don't worry, it'll just be for one day. Kali and Steve do it, so you and Mike can do it as well."

She got a point there, so the girl smiled a little. "Yeah, you're right." The woman then hugged her, her daughter hugging back.

After a bit, the two released their hug. The dirty-blond-haired woman stood up and began to leave the room. "Now, go change and get to bed, alright, sweetie?"

She nodded again. "Okay, Mama."

Terry turned and leaned against the doorway, smiling at her daughter once more. "Good night, sweetheart."

Jane returned the smile and replied, "Good night, Mama." And with that, the woman left to go downstairs.

Jane flopped back on her bed and let out a deep sigh. She honestly felt nervous about doing this, especially since she loved being with Mike all the time, but Hopper was giving him the same talk too, so everything will be fine. Besides, it's just one day. What's the worse that could happen?

---

Hopper decided to give up and stand. He ruffled his son's hair and forced a smile on his face. "Y'know what, buddy? It's been a long day. I'll just talk to you tomorrow." He began walking away to his room. "Go to sleep, bud."

Mike was completely lost on what just happened and why it did, as evident by his weirded-out look and raised eyebrow. He did say that it's been a long day, meaning that it wasn't the best day ever, but he still wanted to know what he wanted to talk about. It did make him act weird tonight...

---

While Billy was driving to Motel 6, he was tapping his hand to the metal song that blared on his radio, grinning to himself. This Stacey chick...she may be as old as Susan, but she had caught his eye for a while now. She looked hot for her age and she actually seemed to have a personality. Now he wonders how well she'll be during their "swimming lessons".

He laughed and looked up at his car mirror, saying, "Hey, Stacey. You know what you really look like?" He grinned. "Like an angel taking my breath away." His expression fell, him looking away from the mirror and muttering under his breath, "Would she like that...? No..." He was going to spend a night with an older woman, so he couldn't come off as awful, especially since he was the young one-

Before he could think more though, something came and broke his windshield, shocking the hell out of him as he tried to stop his car from getting out of control. He eventually crashed near an abandoned steelworks building, the force painful and his forehead bleeding. He cursed as the radio stopped working and he sees his windshield badly damaged. Not only that, he was bleeding. He knew blood drives away the ladies, it could drive away Stacey too.

He crawled out of his car, slowly standing up and checking his now damaged car, cursing some more. Little did he know about the danger about to capture him tonight...

---

Stacey had gotten to Motel 6 pretty early, so she got her and Billy a room with a single bed they're sure to share tonight. She had waited

at the parking lot for him, feeling anxious every minute he wasn't here.

It has been an hour and he still hasn't shown up.

Her anxiousness was pretty high and she began to feel upset. He enjoyed her company, didn't he? She sure as hell enjoyed his. Not only did he have the personality and the body, but also the compliments. He complimented her form at the pool earlier today! Why the hell wasn't he here?

Unless...

The door suddenly opened, revealing the disinterested-looking female clerk as she asked, "You're still waiting?"

Stacey huffed and stood up, getting inside. "Not anymore." She might as well stay the night because she knows she wouldn't get a refund. That piece of shit...

---

**And that's it for Episode 1! What do you guys think of this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**And so Becky, Carl, and their new baby girl Tina appears! As I said before, they'll mostly play the role the rest of the Wheeler family did in canon.**

**However, Stacey is the one that has the hots for (the barely legal) Billy in this AU. It might go a little differently than him and Karen in canon though...**

**I'm sure Kali, in canon, would be more upfront and blunt when she gets treated like garbage, so that's why her and Jonathan's conversation was written as it is.**

**Yes, I did make Hopper snap at Jane, but I figured that since he didn't like how she was "influencing" Mike and she was annoying him at the moment, it was bound to happen. No threats 'cause what father threatens his son's girlfriend? Also, it was fun writing the heart-to-hearts back-to-back like that. xD Too bad things will go south...**

**Keep supporting this fanfic and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

## 56. FINE!

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

After eating breakfast with her family, Jane, wearing a dark-plaid shirt, baggy jeans, white socks, and white sneakers, stood up and put all her empty dishes into the sink, taking a deep breath. Today was the day that she was going to do what her mother told her to do: call Mike and tell him that they won't hang out today. She felt nervous, but assured herself that Mike had the same talk, so everything should be just fine.

She walked to Terry and asked, "Can I call on the phone downstairs?"

She nodded and answered, "Absolutely." She then gave her a reassuring smile. "Just take deep breaths and stay calm."

She nodded and hugged her. "Okay." She then left the kitchen to go down into the basement.

The rest of the family looked concerned. "What was that about?" Kali asked, wearing her hair in a well-combed bun and wearing a black and white geometric dress with white heels.

The long-haired woman looked at everyone and said, "Well, you all know about Jane and Mike, right?" They all nodded, with the exception of Tina, who wore a white headband with a bow and a cute animal onesie, sitting on a tall, pink baby chair with a nearly-empty bowl of baby food and a baby bottle next to it. She wore a white baby bib as well, it being messy due to the food she ate. "Well, his father and I talked about what they were doing and we thought we should tell them each about some changes we're going to make concerning them."

Becky, who had her hair out and some tied to the back and wore a warm-colored plaid shirt and mom jeans, raised her eyebrows. "Really?" she asked.

She nodded again. "Yes. They're spending too much time with each

other, so we talked to them about setting boundaries and what they can do without each other."

Carl, who wore a navy-blue shirt and dark pants, nodded in understanding. "That's smart," he said. "It is quite unhealthy for kids their age to hang out with just each other."

Becky also nodded, looking at her husband. "You also have the other parent doing the same for their kid, so it'll all work out." Tina began cooing a little, so Becky saw that she wanted more of the baby food, so she began feeding her the rest of it.

Kali also nodded. "Exactly. Steve and I are doing the same, especially with our jobs."

She pointed at her. "Right." The two then saw Becky and Carl look confused at the Indian girl.

"Steve?" they both asked.

"You're still with that boy?" Becky asked.

They were surprised that they still remembered him from Christmas 2 years ago. "Oh, well," Kali began, nodding a little. "Yeah."

"Oh." She looked surprised as her husband was.

She gave them a puzzled look. "Why are you two looking at me like that?"

They dropped their surprised expressions, Becky using a napkin to wipe Tina's mouth with. "It's not for any bad reason, sweetie," her aunt said.

"I never expected you two to be...still together," Carl stated. Becky gave him the side-eye for being that blunt.

Kali sighed. "I don't blame you guys. He might not be that bright, but he's a really nice and sweet guy, once you actually get to know him."

Becky smiled at her. "Since you two are still together, I'm sure he is." Kali smiled, knowing her aunt would be understanding. Terry smiled



as well. Carl still looked skeptical though.

...

In the basement, Jane held the handset of the phone, taking her fourth deep breath. "You can do this," she whispered to herself. "Everything's going to be okay. He's had the same talk..." She then looked up at the phone. "Let's go." She grabbed the handset and used the rotator to call the cabin.

---

Mike had woken up earlier than his adoptive father, dressed in a short-sleeved, yellow shirt with black-outlined white stripes, gray shorts, white socks, and black sneakers. He was outside, pacing around for some time, waiting for Jane. It's been an hour and she was nowhere to be seen, much to his dismay. He looked everywhere, every nook and cranny of the area near the cabin. Nothing. No Jane. Where the hell was she? His patience began to thin out.

He let out a sharp exhale and went inside the cabin. There, he went to the new phone installed near the kitchen to call her, but much to his surprise, it rung. He hoped it was Jane, so he grabbed it instantly and answered, "Jane?"

---

"Hi...Mike," she greeted him rather nervously. She cleared her throat. "I, uh...wanted to talk to you about something."

---

Puzzled, he went inside his room and used his power to close the door...and a few seconds later, Hopper came out in his police chief uniform. He walked past the phone, not realizing that Mike was using it, and went inside the kitchen to cook.

...

"What is it?" he asked her.

---

She took another deep breath, mentally convincing herself to stay calm. "So, um...we shouldn't hang out...today."

---

His eyes widened, him dropping his jaw in shock. "What?"

...

Hopper heard his son in his room and that made him realize something:

He still haven't had the "heart-to-heart" with him yet.

"Oh shit," he muttered under his breath as he walked towards the phone.

---

His reply confused her, but she kept going. "I just wanna hang out with my aunt, uncle, and cousin today." She shrugged. "They're visiting, so y'know, I just wanna hang out with them. They're my family."

---

He saw the handset missing and the cord between the crack of the door to Mike's room. He looked down and gritted his teeth. "Goddamn it."

...

He could recall Becky and Carl, but never knew about her cousin. Even so...

"Okay...so then we can hang out later?"

---

She was now even more confused. "Uh, no."

---

He looked more puzzled as well. *"I said that we shouldn't hang out TODAY. You know, like, all day?"* She was chuckling while saying that.

She won't hang out with him all day? "Why not?"

---

She looked a little baffled that he wasn't understanding. "Uh, hello? My aunt, uncle, and cousin? I wanna hang out with them? That's

why?"

---

Right...

"So...we can hang out tonight?"

*"No, Mike!"* she suddenly spat out, making him tense up at the sound of her voice.

---

She groaned and sunk into the ground. "I'm not gonna hang out with you today OR tonight, okay?" She rubbed her temple. "Don't you have something to do?"

---

Now he's starting to look and feel irritated. "No."

---

"No?" Didn't Hopper talk to him as well?

Wait a minute...

"Did Hopper talk to you, at all?"

---

He shook his head. "No, I just woke up."

---

"I mean, last night." She sounded very impatient.

---

"No, he didn't. He acted weird, that's it."

...

Settled near the doorway to listen to the conversation, Hopper's lips drew to a fine line. He knew they were talking about him now...

---

Now she was both shocked and pissed. Without a second thought, she shouted out loud, "Oh, that piece of shit!"

---

Mike looked offended at that. "Hey!"

---

She answered in annoyance, "What?!"

---

"Pop is NOT a piece of shit!"

...

Hopper felt better hearing him say that, but even so...

---

She looked baffled, hearing him say that. She rose from the ground.  
"Yes, he is!"

---

"No, he's not!"

---

"YES, HE IS!"

...

As Kali was leaving for work, she heard her little sister yelling, making her look shocked. "Uh, Mum?" she called out.

"Yes, Kali?" Terry called out.

"Jane's yelling. Is that supposed to happen?"

...

Terry looked like she got struck by lightning as she stood up from her table. "No," she answered as she rushed out of the kitchen, Carl and Becky worried.

...

She just shrugged and got out the door, not wanting to be late because her sister was having a bad call with Mike, she's sure. However, when she does come back, she'll see what happens and what she could do.

---

"NO, HE'S NOT!"

...

The ash-blonde-haired man rubbed his face and muttered under his breath, "Oh, Terry's gonna kill me..."

---

She scoffed and paced around with the phone in her head. "Why are you being so defensive of him?!"

---

"Why did you call him a piece of shit?!"

---

"Because he IS!" she hissed.

...

At that moment, Terry leaned against the door, hearing her yelling.

---

"He's NOT, Jane!"

---

She scoffed again. "Oh, he's not a fat, ugly, lazy-"

---

His jaw dropped as she came up with more demeaning adjectives towards him. "*-old, lousy, arrogant, aggressive, inconsiderate-*"

---

"-intolerant PIECE OF SHIT?!"

...

Terry covered her mouth, aghast. Did this mean...Hopper didn't...?

---

Mike asked angrily, "What is WRONG with you?!"

---

"What is wrong with YOU?!"

---

The freckled boy suddenly got bad déjà-vu, remembering back two years ago when she yelled that to him after throwing Lucas to a metal plate. However, he knew he was wrong at that time. He sure as hell didn't see where he went wrong now. He tried to fight the tears welling up in his eyes as he yelled, "You know what, Jane?!"

---

"What?!"

---

"DON'T hang out with me today!"

---

She scoffed once more. "I wasn't PLANNING TO, you IDIOT!"

---

She...she just called him an idiot.

Jane called him an idiot.

The one girl he cared about most...called him...an idiot.

He could break down right now, but he didn't want to. He sniffled and wiped his eyes, his voice now sounding hurt. "Fine! Go hang out with your STUPID FAMILY!"

---

Now she felt hurt by this statement, tears brimming up in her eyes. However, she was so mad, she couldn't be bothered to break down, so she yelled, "FINE! GO HANG OUT WITH YOUR STUPID PIECE-OF-SHIT DAD!"

---

"FINE!"

---

"FINE!"

---

Mike angrily used his powers to slam open the door, Hopper flinching back. He saw Mike storm out of there. "FINE!"

---

"FINE!"

---

He angrily hung up his phone...

---

...and so did she.

She sunk down into the floor again, beginning to cry. She never wanted this to go this way...but it did. If it wasn't for Hopper not talking to him, Mike wouldn't act like such a moron...

...

Terry felt very forlorn, hearing her daughter cry, so she slowly opened the door and slowly walked back downstairs, seeing her on the ground, covering her crying face. She removed her face from her hands to look up at her mother. She looked very terrible for her. "Jane? Are you okay?" she asked softly.

Jane sniffled and shook her head, answering, "No." Without any more words, the two hugged each other tightly, the woman wanting to comfort her daughter.

Becky then appeared, going downstairs to the basement. She had asked Carl to look after Tina for a bit, then seeing what was happening. The two looked up at her. No words needed to be said about what was going on. She looked sad, went to her sister and niece, crouched down, and joined the hug too.

---

Mike sniffled and wiped the tears coming out of his eyes. Jim slowly moved the door away as he saw his son wiping his tears and holding back sobs horribly. Solemn, he walked towards him and said softly, "Hey, buddy." He turned to him, his eyes and nose red and his cheeks wet from the tears, despite the boy wiping them away. He opened his arms out to welcome a hug, and so the boy did. He let him cry onto his uniform as they both held each other tightly.

---

In their home, Dave was cooking up some organic breakfast in the kitchen while a radio near him was playing Janis Joplin. Andrew was sitting in front of the TV in the living room, reading *The Fellowship of the Ring* and not paying attention to the news. For the sake of Stacey returning, he wore a plain white shirt over his unshaved chest and also a pair of Dave's shorts.

The door suddenly opened, making him away from his book and at a rather distressed Stacey. He didn't notice it right away as he greeted, "Hey, Stace. How was..." She stormed passed him, the guy noticing the pissed-off look on her face. "...the date?" He knew that meant bad news, so he folded the corner of the page he was on, stood up, set the book down on the couch, and walked towards her direction.

She walked passed the kitchen, Dave noticing and waving at her. "Heya, Stace," he greeted with no greeting back as she went into the hallway to get into her room. He looked concerned. "Stacey?"

Andrew stopped at the hallway and sighed. "What happened?" he asked her. She didn't answer as they both heard the door to her room slam.

The two men tensed up at that, looking worried for their female friend. "Shit," the dirty-blonde-haired guy muttered. "Did that kid not live up to her expectations?"

The long-haired man put his hands on his waist. "Or maybe he treated her like garbage...or didn't show up."

He looked pretty mad. "No man, no matter how young, treats Stacey like garbage and gets away with it."

Andrew nodded. "Exactly."

...

Stacey, having her makeup removed in the motel, changed into a salmon-pink shirt, a jean jacket over that, tight skinny jeans, and black flats to go to work in. She didn't care that she looked too plain, she was absolutely furious. She hadn't been stood up on a date like



that since George from high school. HIGH SCHOOL. Was that a thing for high school boys? Standing up their dates? She huffed, grabbing her wallet and shoving it into her pocket.

She then went to the bathroom and looked at herself in the mirror. No makeup because she didn't feel like putting any on, so she fluffed out her hair a little. It looked fine, so she went back out and into the kitchen, looking at the clock. She still got some time before she should go to work.

She sat at the dinner table, where Andrew sat next to her and placed a gentle hand on her shoulder. "Bad date, huh?" he asked her. She sighed deeply and nodded. "You wanna talk about it now?"

She shook her head. "There's nothing to talk about other than he stood me up."

The two looked shocked. "He stood you up?!" Dave exclaimed.

"Yeah. Waited an hour for him and he didn't come. Not even after I went back into our room."

He hugged her to comfort her. "It's alright. That kid doesn't know what he's missing."

"Yeah!" They heard their friend slide something into some plates. "Your jokes, your 'take-no-bullshit' attitude..."

Andrew smiled. "Your smile, your intelligence..."

Stacey smiled as well and laughed a little. "Your killer gymnastics..."

"Your 'better-than-Dave's' cooking skills."

"Hey!"

Stacey now laughed at her two friends listing off what they liked about her. "Okay, okay, I get it, you guys," she said, hugging Andrew back. "Thanks."

"It's not a problem, Stace," Andrew replied, the two releasing their hugs. "But your job at the mall is a problem."

She scoffed, saying, "It's only temporary."

"But do you know what they do?"

"They made a lot of other people jobless, yours truly included," Dave asked, coming in with a plate of eggs, a small salad, and whole wheat toast. He set it in front of his female friend.

She held her hands up. "Okay, okay. I'm just saying, it's just temporary until I find another job that'll accept me."

"Good."

The curly-haired woman then looked at Andrew, smirking just a little. "Speaking of the mall..." He looked a little puzzled. "Since I work in The Gap, Terry IS my co-worker, so..."

Andrew sharply exhaled and rolled his eyes, leaning his face onto his palm. "Oh my God, you too?"

His friends laughed at him, Dave bringing in the rest of the breakfast. "Dude, come on. It doesn't hurt to hang out with her for a day."

"I'll put in a good word for you to her, I can cover for her and you two can go off and chat," Stacey added.

He sighed and rubbed his temple. "Fine, since you two won't shut up about it."

They both laughed. "Trust me, you'll thank us later," his female friend replied. With that, they began eating their breakfast. He guessed hanging out with Terry again wouldn't be such a bad idea. He just hoped she was up for it as well, that's all.

---

"And she...called me an idiot," Mike said, him and Hopper eating eggs at the dinner table. "She called me that. I don't know why she called me that, I..." He looked very heartbroken, pausing to eat some of his Eggs. "I don't know what's going on with her."

He placed a hand on the boy's shoulder, looking at him reassuringly. "It's not your fault, okay?" he told him. "It's just...she was probably

having a bad morning." Not that she was mad at him for not having the heart-to-heart with Mike and the fact that he snapped at her on the way to her home...

"Really?"

He ate some of his eggs and nodded. "Yeah. But you shouldn't go to her since she's clearly upset."

He nodded, looking down at his food. "Okay. So what do I do?"

He began thinking, then looked at Mike. "Well, since I can't drop you off there, you can stay here." Suddenly, a newer idea flickered in his head. He stood up slowly, finished his eggs, and put the fork back on his plate. "Or...you could hang out with your other friends."

Mike looked a little interested, standing up and eating the last piece of his Eggos. "Other friends? Like Lucas, Will, and Dustin?"

He nodded. "Yeah. You can hang out with them. You're all boys, so it'll cheer you up." He looked unsure, the man patting him on the back as he took his plate and fork and placed them on top of his. "Trust me, bud, it will."

He nodded back. "If you say so, Pop."

He then placed the dishes into the sink and guided him out of the cabin. "Let's go. I know the way to Will's." He nodded again. Jane wasn't going to be hanging out with the boys, so he wasn't too worried about her being there. Still, this was going to be the first time he's ever not hung out with her. That did feel weird to him...but at the same time, she was so rude and mean to him that he started not to care anymore.

---

Terry, now dressed in a multi-colored shirt, Gap jeans, and black heels, went to Jane and petted her hair. "I'm going to work now, sweetheart," she said to her. "Everyone else is here to support you if you need anything, okay?"

She nodded. "I know, Mama."

She sighed and looked at the clock in the basement. "I'll have a word with Hopper. Just try and enjoy yourself, okay?" She nodded again, making her kiss her forehead. She then looked at her sister. "Take care of her."

Becky smiled. "Always have, always will," she answered. She smiled back as they exchanged waves and she went upstairs and left.

The short-haired woman looked at her niece and said, "There is one other thing I need ya to know about relationships."

Jane looked up at her. She already told her and her mother what happened during the phone call and how she felt about it. They, of course, comforted her about it and told her it wasn't her fault. "What is it?"

She sighed and looked away from her. "Relationships aren't all about rainbows and sunshine. Sometimes, two people have obstacles to overcome when they're together. Arguing's one of 'em."

The tomboy sighed and looked away from her too. "It's awful, I..." She looked very guilty and sad. "I said things I didn't want to and..."

"I know, it happens." The two looked at each other, Becky wrapping an arm around her niece's shoulder. "Your uncle and I have been there many times. There were times when I called him a bastard and a complete moron, when he'd call me stupid and careless. But we're still happy and we still care about each other."

"But...how did you two make up, after all those times?" Jane asked.

She took a deep breath and looked upstairs. "Well, we take some time apart to calm down. Then, we go see each other and talk like adults should." She laughed a little. "Most of our arguments are about the most smallest n' silliest things, so we can make up quickly."

"What about serious arguments?"

Her smile disappeared. "Then we talk to each other seriously and open up our feelings about the issue. We eventually come an understanding and make up." Jane nodded, understanding that. Maybe she should do the same with Mike.

She saw the look on her niece's face and stroked her hair. "You can do the same with Mike, sweetie. You two are young and new to this, so doin' that will help you two understand how this all works."

Jane smiled, feeling a little bit hopeful for the future of her and Mike. "Yeah...you're right." She then hugged her aunt. "Thanks, Auntie."

Becky smiled back and hugged her back. "Aww, sweetie, don't mention it." They then released the hug. "By the way, you don't have to hang out with just us."

The girl looked a little puzzled. "What?"

She shrugged. "Don'tcha have any lady friends you can call over and hang out with?" There was one...Max.

She nodded at her. "I do."

---

While Kali was filling up her boss's coffee cup with coffee, she looked down at the notes she took last night:

*Doris Driscoll*  
*4819 Cornwallis Road*  
*Rats...with Disease?*

This information...it could make for a serious and great story. It'll show these pigs who's on top, especially with a topic like rats with disease. It would make a thrilling, attention-grabbing article, unlike the shit these idiots were putting out.

She looked back at the coffee cup to see that she was overfilling it. She gasped and set the pot down. "Oh my God, shit," she muttered to herself as she quickly grabbed a napkin to wipe the cup down.

"Ooopsie-daisy!" called out Bruce from his work space. She glared at him, having his cup of coffee and his crossed legs on top of the desk. He pointed at her and had a joking look on his face. "Careful, Curry Kali. You don't wanna get the AMERICAN coffee too hot now!" He and the rest of the men began to snicker. She looked away from them and huffed, trying to keep her hate for them at bay. "Pouring coffee's a tough gig for an Indian girl." The men began laughing about. She

still tried to remain calm, only looking slightly pissed off.

...

She knocked on the door of her boss's office and let herself in, plastering a fake smile on her face. She set his coffee on the table. "Here you go, sir, two creams, two sugars, just the way you like it."

He looked at the cup, grabbing it as he focused on the papers he had. "Thanks, sweetheart."

The name felt weird to her, coming from someone that definitely wasn't her mom. However, she buried that feeling and nodded at him, still smiling. "Of course." She looked away, then at her notepad she was carrying as well, closed. She took a deep breath and looked at her boss. "Tom?"

"Hmm?" He looked up at her.

"I really hate to ask you this, but..." She pointed a finger at him, raising an eyebrow. "Can you have one of the other girls go and grab lunch today?"

He looked away from her, then back at her, his blank expression and open mouth unchanged. "They're needed at their desks."

She faked an understanding look. "I know that, I just..." She looked down, taking a deep breath as he sipped his coffee. "I really need to visit my gynecologist." That was enough to make him choke on his sip of coffee.

...

Happy, Kali got into the photo-processing room to get Jonathan, calling out, "Jonathan!"

He jumped back in surprise at her voice and the light, looking annoyed. "Oh, Kal, come on, the LIGHT!"

She tilted her head out the door as a gesture for him to go. "We're going right now."

...

They exited the building with their things, walking to their respective cars. "Listen, Kal, I..." Jonathan said, sighing. "I don't know if this is such a good idea anymore."

She looked at him, surprised. "Really?" She looked away and smiled. "I think this is the best idea I've had all summer."

They stopped when Jonathan swung around to his car and got out his keys. "I'm just saying, what harm is there in asking?"

"Um, the harm is that Mr. Holloway will say no." Jonathan then unlocked the door to his car, holding it open and looking at his friend. "We ask for forgiveness, not permission." She then grinned while he looked worried. "And if this story is as good as I know it'll be, then he won't give a shit." She swung around to her car, digging for her keys at the purse.

"OR, the old lady is nuts, the story blows up in your face-" She gave him a baffled look. "And Tom fires us!"

She scoffed and grinned. "Aaaand I'll never have to work in this shithole again. Both good outcomes." She then unlocked the door to her car.

"I said 'us'."

She raised an eyebrow up as well. "Come on, you'd be happy not working here anymore too." He opened his mouth to retort, but he really couldn't find anything to retort with. She perked her head up and said, "That's what I thought." He sighed, being defeated.

"So, you'll check up with Steve and meet me at the address?"

She nodded. "That's the plan." She then entered into her car and started up the engine. There was no turning back now, was there? He got in his own and did the same, the two driving off to their destinations.

---

Jim had dropped off Mike to the Byers's, but didn't leave unless Will

answered the door. There was no way he was leaving this boy alone, by himself, with the possibility of no one being there. He and his son saw another bike parked in front of the house, so that meant one of his other friends were there. The freckled boy went up to the door and took a deep breath. He then knocked on it as loud as he could.

...

Inside, Lucas was in Will's room, just hanging around while the auburn-haired boy was getting his D&D set ready. They stopped what they were doing as they heard the knocking. Lucas stood up and said, "I'll get it." Will just nodded as the African-American boy walked out and towards the door. He opened it up and saw Mike...and just Mike, much to his surprise. "Mike?"

...

Will froze at the mention of his name. He was annoyed, wondering why the hell he was here.

...

Satisfied, Hopper drove off to go to Melvald's.

...

"Hi, Lucas," he greeted him.

He looked around for his lady friend just be sure, but saw just him. "You came here by yourself?"

"Yes."

"Where's Jane?"

He looked annoyed. "What about Jane?"

He looked surprised by his reply and tone, then he realized something, nodding. "Ooooh, I see what's going on."

He looked confused. "What's going on?"



He wrapped his arm around his shoulder and got him inside. "Come in here, we need a talk."

"Talk?"

They both then got into Will's room, the boy just sitting there at his desk, getting D&D ready. He and Mike looked at each other, before Will looked at Lucas. "What's going on?"

"This guy has a girl problem with Jane," he answered, giving him a pat on the back. His eyes widened at the mention of her name, him looking at the freckled boy. He swore, if he did anything bad to her...

---

**Stopping there. How was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**Now, I don't know if this is just me, but I had a problem with this season having a comedic tone throughout the entire season. Having that tone at first is fine since it fits the fact that no one knows what's really going on until shit hits the fan. However, having that tone throughout is not a good contrast from the other seasons. So, I'll amp up the drama to make this kinda mirror the other seasons.**

**That said, it's why I had Jane and Mike's argument be more intense and dramatic than the canon attempt of Mike to lie to El. Poor kids...they've never gone through something like that before, which was why they cried after they hung up on each other. I hope I wrote that entire situation well 'cause later in this second episode...oooh boy...**

**On a lighter note, poor Stacey. But hey, at least she's got her friends to cheer her up!**

**Yeah, I am still going to pair Mike and Jane with those they hung out with in this episode canonically, but it'll be different.**

**Follow, favorite, review, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**

## 57. Okay, Hit Me

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

Terry arrived at the police station and went to the front desk, seeing Flo there. She walked up to her, the elderly woman looking up. "May I help you, m'am?" she asked.

"Hey, is Chief Jim Hopper here?" she asked her.

She shook her head. "No."

She sighed heavily and darted her eyes away for a second. "Do you know where he is?"

"If my woman's intuition is correct, he's probably at City Hall."

"Great," she muttered under her breath, looking at the time. She needed to go to work now. "Well, thanks for the help." Flo just nodded as she left the station. She couldn't feel more annoyed. When she's got the time, she'll go and have a few words with him.

---

Hopper, stiff and nervous as all hell, parked at Melvald's, seeing Joyce alone at the register, surely with no service before him. He took a deep breath. During his ride here, he was thinking about what to tell her. He can't lie about having the heart-to-heart, Terry would have to break the news afterward-and the last thing he wanted was Joyce to be pissed off at him. At the same time, he couldn't disappoint her by telling the truth. He was sure she wouldn't think well of him when he admits that he screwed up and Terry probably wanted to kick his ass for it.

He finally came up with something. It's vague and he'll have to put on a convincing performance, but it was the best he could think of.

He took another deep breath before exiting the car, wearing his sheriff's hat and sunglasses. He entered in and let out an exaggerated huff, getting the brunette's attention. "Y'know, Joyce?" he asked her,

making her expression towards him a curious one. "I'm gonna be honest with you." She nodded slowly, looking concerned as he finally got in. He removed his hat and faked a smile. "I...maybe got a little nervous about my 'heart-to-heart' with Mike for a while before I had to drop Jane off at Terry's." He chuckled, getting close to the brunette, who looked even more concerned. "Like, I started imagining a thousand different ways it could go down, okay?"

She nodded, understanding. "That can happen," she said. "Then what?"

He looked away from her for a second, continuing, "I just thought that maybe, since he's...not a little boy anymore, it could go wrong in those thousands of different ways."

She nodded again. "Uh-huh..."

He sighed and took off his sunglasses. "I thought he was going to act like I did when I was his age, having my dad try to talk to me about my personal life." He paused, looking her in the eyes and faking a smile again. "But..."

Her eyes widened in interest and she made a circular motion with her hand. "But...?"

And then, he got away from her, grinning and announcing, "Nah, I shouldn't ruin the surprise."

Joyce looked shocked, smiling nervously. "What surprise?"

He turned to her and said, "A surprise you'll get at dinner tonight, Enzo's, 7 o'clock."

It was clear that wasn't the answer she was looking for. As she was going to rebut, he added, "And before you say no, lemme just take one thing-" He held up one finger, getting close to her again. "One thing, crystal clear." She looked a bit puzzled, but then crossed her arms and listened. He motioned his hand between them. "I'm not asking you out on a date."

She looked baffled at that statement. "W-w-wait, a DATE?" She quirked up an eyebrow and leaned towards him. "You didn't say

anything about a date-

He nodded and interrupted, "That's just it. I didn't SAY that. I just wanted to make sure I clear up any confusion on your part."

She looked a bit appalled to hear that coming from his mouth. "There's not...?"

"That's great, 'cause it's just two friends gathered for a nice dinner."

She nervously laughed. "Me and Terry eating at Enzo's are two friends gathered for a nice dinner-"

He looked a little bit hurt, though it was clearly exaggerated. "I'm not your friend, Joyce?"

She nervously laughed again, shaking her head. "That's not what I mean, Hop."

"Of course it's not." They both laughed with each other, a playfulness now in the air.

After they stopped, Joyce finally asked, "Well, how late is it gonna be?"

He looked away from her for a second before answering, "I'll make sure you'll be home by 9."

Her smile dropped. "8."

"8:30. I'll pick you up."

She scoffed. "I'll meet you there."

He nodded. "Okay. Enzo's at 7, meeting there. That's a deal." Joyce sighed, clearly defeated by his persistence. Though it wasn't a particularly BAD persistence...especially since she usually goes back home alone...

The two exchanged smiles before Hopper's walkie-talkie whirled with Powell's voice. He sighed and said, "I gotta go, but remember-

"Enzo's, 7, meeting there," Joyce replied, the two exchanging smiles again...liking the looks of them. He then exited as he answered Powell through the walkie-talkie.

---

While the African-American officer was telling his chief about what was going on outside of Town Hall, Dave stood in front of protestors with a megaphone in one hand and a large cardboard sign that wrote "*DOWNTOWN OVER MALL-TOWN*" in blue and red paint in the other. In the megaphone, he chanted, "What do we want?!"

"Recall the mall!" the protestors chanted back.

"What does that mean?!"

"Better for us all!"

"And the supporters?!"

"Shame on them all!"

Even though his female friend works there, it wasn't like she loved it there or anything, so that's why he never feels guilty doing this. Besides, that damn place was why he, and the rest of these protestors, were out of jobs. Stacey was just lucky to land one in the midst of annoying-ass teenagers flooding in to get them.

"What do we want?!"

"Recall the mall!"

Officer Powell then told Hopper, "You need to get your ass into Town Hall NOW!"

---

Steve couldn't be more thrilled to have Dustin back. He missed this kid, who was obviously his favorite among the other kids (yes, including his girlfriend's little sister). He didn't care Robin gave him looks 'cause he was friends with another kid. He was BACK!

And has a girlfriend that sounds really right for him, yet too good to be true...apparently.

They sat at a booth, Dustin eating a free sundae shaped like a sailboat. He pointed at it and looked at him, asking, "So, you can eat as much of this as you want?"

He nodded. "Yeah, I mean, sure. It's not really a good idea for me though." He motioned his hands to his body. "Gotta keep myself in shape."

Dustin ate another piece of the sailboat sundae. "For Kali, right?"

He chuckled. "Kinda, but just for me."

He nodded. "You two are still together?" He ate another piece.

He nodded back at him, confident. "Oh yeah, we're still going strong. It's just...we got different jobs-"

"Apparently, she's got a slightly better one," Robin called out condescendingly, throwing an empty used cup out.

He looked annoyed at her before looking at Dustin. "Ignore her."

The curly-haired boy shrugged. "She seems cool."

"No, she's not."

"But Kali's got a better job than you?"

He scoffed. "Okay, listen, she's in an internship, that means she doesn't get paid."

He nodded. "Oh, I get it."

He shook his head. "I've yet to hear her say anything good about it though."

He looked surprised. "Oh."

"Yeah." He looked around. "So, where're the other knuckleheads?"

Dustin had told him that they ditched him and of course, he didn't like that as much as him. However, he seemed to have intercepted a secret Russian communication, which he tried to whisper, then

exclaimed for everyone in the store to hear. But this could mean that they could be heroes...American heroes. He liked the sound of that.

He scooted next to him, smiling. "American heroes, huh?"

He nodded. "Just think. You could finally prove to Kali that you're as worthy and just as capable as she is."

"I can prove I'm worthy and capable." He nodded slowly. "I like that." Dustin nodded with him. He was getting tired of being the least accomplished in their relationship, after all. "What's the catch?" Turned out all he needed to do was help him translate the communication somehow. Just somehow.

Suddenly, Kali appeared in the parlor and saw Steve and Dustin sitting together on the booth to her right. They both looked surprised to see her, Dustin hiding the English-to-Russian translate book. She looked surprised to see Dustin. "You're back," she said to him.

He smiled, saying, "Yup."

She sat down next to her boyfriend, who wrapped his arm around her shoulders. "How was camp?"

He nodded. "Pretty good."

"Get this." Kali looked up at her boyfriend. "He's made this thing that carries communication to another state."

She looked awed. "Wow, really?"

"Cerebro," Dustin said. "That's its name."

She nodded at him. "Well, I'm happy you had a good time there AND invent something good."

He bowed his head to her. "Thank you."

"AND..." Kali looked at Steve again. "He apparently has a girlfriend now."

She looked surprised again, looking at the curly-haired boy once

more. "A girlfriend?"

The boy smiled. "Name's Suzie, with a 'z'. Met her at camp."

"He says she's ho-" He caught himself and cleared his throat. "Prettier than Phoebe Cates. You know her, right?"

She nodded. "'Fast Times', right?"

"Right," they both answered.

She smiled at him. "Well, I'm glad you got a girlfriend now."

His eyes widened. "You don't think I'm lying?"

She scoffed. "I never took you as a liar."

He pointed at Steve. "Well, your boyfriend does."

She looked up at him with narrow eyes, him holding his hands up. "Little skepticism never hurt no one." She chuckled and shook her head. "By the way, don't you have your internship?"

"Yeah, Steve told me about it," Dustin added.

She sighed and leaned forward. "I trust the two of you to keep a secret, right?"

They nodded. "Yeah, of course, babe," Steve answered, his arm off of her shoulders.

"Yeah, absolutely," Dustin answered at the same time.

She nodded and said, "So, Jonathan and I are investigating something..."

---

Max had skated all the way to Jane's house after getting a call from her to come. Once she saw the house, she skated into the driveway and did a kick-stop, walking to the front door. She rang the doorbell, Becky opening it up a few seconds later. She put on a friendly face and greeted, "Hey."



Jane told her that family was visiting, so she assumed that woman must be her aunt. "Hey...Aunt Becky, right?"

She placed a hand over her heart. "You can just call me Becky."

She nodded, liking this woman already. "Alright...Becky."

"You're Max, right?"

She smiled at her. "That's me."

She pointed her thumb back. "Jane's down in the basement."

She nodded again and got in. "Okay, thanks." She saw Tina watching Sesame Street in a booster seat with Carl sitting next to her. It kind of reminded her of a vague memory of watching Sesame Street with her dad...

Her real dad.

She looked away and went downstairs, seeing Jane laying on the couch and staring at the ceiling. She sat up when she saw her come down. "Hey," she greeted her.

"Hey, Jane," she greeted back, leaning her skateboard against the pole the phone was on and sitting next to her. "You said you were having a shitty morning?"

She nodded. "Yeah."

"You mind me asking why?"

She looked at her. "It's Mike."

She widened her eyes, getting close to her and getting all her attention towards her. "Boy troubles?"

She nodded. "Definitely."

She nodded back at her. "Okay, hit me."

---

Mike sat on the edge of the bed, Will at his desk, still with his D&D

board, while Lucas was pacing around the room, lending an ear to the freckled boy's story. "And then I said to her that she shouldn't hang out with me, and then she said she wasn't planning and...called me an idiot."

Both the boys looked shocked that she said that, Lucas saying, "Oooof...after all you two have been through..." He bared his teeth in cringe.

"Jane...called you that?" Will asked.

He looked at him. "Yes."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes." That didn't sound like her at all...

"Then what happened?" Lucas asked.

He sighed, pursing his lips and looking down on the floor. "I said she could go hang out with her stupid family, then..."

---

"I told him he could go hang out with his piece-of-shit dad," Jane said, looking down at the floor.

Max looked sad and understanding of her. "Then what?"

"We both yelled 'fine' at each other, then..."

---

"I hung up and cried."

---

"I hung up and cried."

---

Lucas sighed sharply and held his arms up. "Well, dude, you got yourself a Class-A problem," he said, sitting next to him.

"Class-A problem?" he asked, perplexed.

He placed a hand on his shoulder. "You two just had a heated

argument."

"Yeah, if what you're saying is true," Will said. Both the boys glared at him, making him look away and gulp. "Which I think it is..."

"And you cried too. That's a MAJOR problem 'cause no girl should make a guy cry in a relationship."

---

"He made you CRY?!" Max exclaimed, Jane nodding. She scoffed and stood up, pacing around. "What a piece of shit!"

"Exactly," Jane replied. "Even though Hopper never had the talk with him, he acted so defensive and rude."

Max clapped her hands and pointed them at her. "Exactly. No guy, EVER, should make a girl cry in a relationship."

---

"What if I made her cry?" Mike asked. Will tensed up at that.

"Whether or not you did, she made YOU cry-" He pointed at him and stood up to make a clearing gesture with his hands. "-so nothing's forgiven."

---

"What if I...made him cry?" Jane asked.

Max scoffed. "Boys don't cry."

She narrowed her eyes at her. "Mike does."

She sighed, remembering that he wasn't like any other boy. "Okay, but even if he does, he made YOU cry, so nothing should be forgiven."

---

"What should I do?"

Before Lucas could say anything, Will blurted out, "Stay away from her." The two boys looked at him, making him feel nervous for saying that out of the blue. He wished he hadn't at the moment, but he took

a deep breath and added, "I mean, girls are really unpleasant when they're mad, right?"

Lucas nodded and replied, "Yeah." He then grasped Mike's shoulders tightly, the two exchanging glances. "For now, you HAVE to stay away from her. Don't call her, don't see her, none of that!" He shook him a little, Mike's eyes widening a little. "Don't even answer her calls and if she tries to get your attention, just walk away. Run, if you have to!"

Will felt guilty for bringing that up, but then he thought...the less he hangs out with Jane, the more she'll be back to the girl she was before. And also, Mike giving her the cold shoulder...could give Will an advantage.

"You understand that?" Lucas asked Mike.

He nodded. "Yeah."

---

"Auntie Becky said I should take some time away from him and then talk to him when the time is right."

The red-haired girl nodded at that. "Yeah, that seems like a good idea." She then sat next to her again. "For now, don't call him, don't try to see him-don't even answer if he calls."

"If he calls?" Jane asked.

"Yeah, as far as you know for now, he doesn't exist."

"Doesn't...exist?" She wasn't so sure about that...

---

"Jane may be our friend, but she treated you like garbage," Lucas added. "It doesn't matter that she's a girl. Make her get a taste of her own medicine."

Will pursed his lips. He didn't like Jane being treated like garbage, but if it makes her and Mike history...

---

"Just go about your own business," Max added. "Don't worry about him or Hopper. No one likes hang-ups. Just focus on yourself for a while."

"Focus on myself..." Jane murmured to herself. That seemed like a good idea.

"You guys had a garbage argument. Get it out of your system 'cause garbage helps no one." The brown-haired tomboy nodded.

---

"And if she doesn't try to fix this..."

---

"And if he keeps on being a piece of shit..."

---

"If she doesn't explain herself..."

---

"If he doesn't explain himself..."

---

"Dump her ass."

---

"Dump his ass."

---

He looked shocked at that suggestion, knowing what the hell that meant.

Will held back the need to smile, drawing his lips to a thin line and nodding. For once, Lucas actually gave good advice. No Mike and Jane means no more bad influence on Jane.

---

She looked appalled her suggestion, then asked, "As a last resort, right?"

She nodded, though it looked like she was misunderstood. "Yeah, yeah, as a last resort."

---

Lucas got his hands off Mike's shoulders and gave him a reassuring smile. "You gotta trust me, dude. I know my shit from dating Max." He held up five fingers. "I've broke up with Max five times. FIVE. TIMES." He paused to put his hand on his chest. "But I didn't sit on my ass to despair about her. I went along with my own business, not doing anything concerning her, then when it was time for her, I won her back EVERY. SINGLE. TIME!" Mike nodded in understanding. He thought that clearly, Lucas knew what he was talking about, so he should follow his advice.

---

Max held her open hand up. "You see this, Jane?" she asked her friend, who nodded. "This is how many times I've broken up with Lucas. But I never, I mean NEVER, let myself get hung up on him. I've pretended that he never existed: never called him, never recalled seeing him if I did, never returned his calls, nothing! I focused on myself and did my own business. Then, when I think I should patch things up with him, he practically crawls to me and I win him back!" She snapped her fingers. "Like that! So, trust me on this. I'm a professional." She really was, wasn't she? Plus, it was amusing to hear how Lucas was as a boyfriend.

---

"In fact, we've never hung out as just us guys before," Lucas added, turning to Will. "Isn't that right?"

He nodded again, a bit slowly, and answered, "Yes..."

Lucas looked back at Mike and got him on his feet. "C'mon, hang out with the boys."

Mike looked interested, but also puzzled. "Where?"

"I'll show ya. Let's go!" He then got out the door, Mike following behind him.

Will threw his arm up and shouted, "What about D&D-"

"C'mon, Will! Let's show Mike a good time!" He groaned and stood up from his desk. Not ready to leave his D&D stuff, he grabbed the box

and put the pieces there. He then grabbed his backpack, got the box in there, and zipped it up. "Come on, Will!"

"I'M COMING!" he shouted as he ran out to hang out with Lucas and Mike. God, he hoped that time will go by fast.

---

"In fact..." Max stood up again and faced her lady friend, putting her hands on her hips. "How about you convince your aunt and uncle to take us to the mall? That'd be a nice place to hang out and focus on yourself."

Jane stood up as well and smiled. "I can. It sounds like fun."

"Duh!"

They then ran up the stairs and into the living room, where the two and their daughter were at. Jane continued smiling as she said, "Max and I wanna hang out at the mall, so can you drive us there?"

Becky smiled back at her, happy that she was happy, and said, "Course, girls." They both smiled at each other and high-fived. She then looked at her husband and asked, "Wanna go to the mall, honey?"

He shrugged and stood up, turning off the TV with the remote. "Sure," he answered plainly, picking up Tina from her seat. "I wanted to see what the mall is like."

She stood up as well, getting the keys from the new key-chain rack. She jiggled them and said, "Let's go." She exited out of the home, then the now giddy girls, then Carl and Tina.

---

So, in turn with Kali telling them about a possible rat infestation, they told her about the intercepted Russian signal and that they were going to decode it. That info was pretty interesting for her and gave her an idea. "What if these were all interconnected?" she asked them.

They looked a little puzzled. "Uh...what?" Steve asked.

She looked at him, flipping her palm upwards. "What if these rats are

part of the Russians' scheme?"

They both still looked puzzled. "What do you mean?" Dustin also asked.

She sighed, looking at the two of them. "If what this woman says is true, then it could be possible that the Russians would be deploying disease-ridden rats upon the town to send out a warning."

The curly-haired boy nodded, looking like he understood. He pointed a finger at her. "Like the Black Plague, but intentional."

She nodded back at him, smiling. "Exactly." Steve wished he got that. He learned about the Black Plague, it just didn't...click for him at the second.

"Could be. Maybe that's what the code is." He waved his tape around. "Could be a message to deploy the rats."

Now she pointed at him. "Exactly."

Feeling left out, Steve spoke up by saying, "Okay, so that is a possibility." The two looked at him. "Why here? This is practically nowhere compared to D.C. and shit."

Kali looked thoughtful for a moment, then answered, "Maybe they're starting small."

"That makes sense," Dustin added. "Targeting smaller, lesser-known towns would be a strategic move to destroying populations right under the government's nose." Steve and Kali looked at him curiously, making him say, "I've played a lot of D&D. I know this."

"You definitely have a point there," the Indian girl said, moving away from her boyfriend's hold and standing up. "I'll investigate though and see if it's legit." She held the strap of her purse before looking at her boyfriend. "Can you still come by tonight? At 8?"

Steve nodded, answering, "Yeah, you'd get the update from me."

She giggled a little. "Yeah." She waved to them and said, "I'll see you guys later." With that and the guys waving back at her, she left to go



to the address and meet Doris with Jonathan.

The two looked at each other, Dustin with the tape in hand and Steve saying, "Let's go to the back and crack this thing wide open." He then got out of the table.

"Right behind ya," the boy replied, also getting out and throwing away the new empty sundae bowl as they went to the back. Little did they know that Robin was watching the entire time...

---

While Dave was too busy leading the protest against the mall, ironically, Stacey drove Andrew there. He said that he needed to look around so he and Terry wouldn't get lost when they finally hang out, so she let him be and went to work. There, her duty at the moment was folding clothes with Terry, a perfect time to talk to her.

"After waiting for an hour, I went to our room, took off my makeup, and fell asleep, IN MY DRESS," she told her, looking frustrated. "I usually sleep with my sleeping cap and my tank top and underwear, not my entire DRESS!"

Terry looked sorry for her, despite the fact that she had..."plans" with an 18-year-old, folding a decorative shirt and putting it down in a pile of shirts just like it. "I'm sorry about that," she said in a forgiving voice. "Why didn't you take it off?"

She sighed, folding up a plain blue t-shirt for the pile of the same shirts. "I was too tired to even try."

She nodded. "And he still didn't come?"

She shook her head. "In the morning, I just put my heels and purse back on, then left. I already paid the lady at the desk for the room." She shook her head again, putting the folded shirt into the pile. "Can you believe that? Not even when I went to bed did he come." After she was done, she moved onto another pile of shirts, another one of the decorative ones, and folded one of them. "You think there's some reason why he did that? You're a Psychology major, right?"

She answered, "That's right." She was done with that folded pile of

shirts and going to a pile of tri-colored sweaters, folding one of those as she began thinking. "Have you seen The Graduate?"

Stacey chuckled. "No. Tried once, but I fell asleep." That made Terry chuckle as well. "But I know that film's about...that kind of relationship."

She folded another sweater and put it in the folded pile. "Since you haven't seen the movie in full..." She sighed. "There are two possibilities."

The curly-haired woman turned to her curious. "Which are...?"

"One, he could be intimidated by you."

That made her scoff. "What? HIM? Intimidated by ME?"

The dirty-blond-haired woman looked at her, stopping her folding of another sweater. "It may not look like it from your conversations, but perhaps due to the fact that he's now old enough to vote and you're as old as his stepmother, probably..." Now Stacey stopped folding and looked at her friend, putting a hand on her hip. "He probably didn't feel ready or he may he was battling with his morality."

Stacey took that in, then looked disbelieving, shrugging her shoulders. "That doesn't sound like him."

Terry shrugged her shoulders as well. "That is one possibility. The second..." She went back to folding the sweaters. "He's met another girl his age that he's beginning to like as well."

Stacey's eyes grew large. "What?"

"It is possible for him to meet another girl and feel more comfortable with her than...with you."

She scoffed, shaking her head. "I don't see him chatting with any girls his age at the pool."

"Then he probably sees this girl outside of the pool." Stacey took a bit to digest that, looking away in thought and a bit of sadness. Him seeing another girl outside of the pool...no...could he?

"Or..." Stacey looked at Terry again, who looked at her as well. "Maybe he's doing that right under your nose and you haven't seen it yet." Her eyes widened again, the woman shocked. She looked away in thought again. Were there any girls his age at the pool he could be getting steady with behind her back? There was that one lifeguard that goes before him-

Wait.

That lifeguard...yeah, that could be her.

She let out a heavy sigh and finally continued folding the shirts. "Well, thanks for your input, Terry."

She smiled at her. "You're welcome. It's no problem." Stacey returned the smile before her friend added, "But one good thing you can do is just talk to him."

Her friend looked at her curiously. "Why would I do that?"

"Well, just because he...just graduated high school, it doesn't mean that he still acts like a kid. I'm sure you two can talk about it like adults."

Stacey looked solemn. "And if he doesn't want to talk about it?"

Terry shrugged again, also looking solemn as she was thinking about...Martin. "Either he doesn't know how to handle that situation or...you got your answer." Stacey nodded, the conversation stopping there as they continued folding clothes. She did want to confront Billy about standing her up on their "private swimming lessons", but not right now. Andrew will eventually come by and she'll have to cover for Terry when they hit it off. Maybe when she gets off by six, she'll confront him then.

---

When Billy arrived at the pool, the first thing he did was go in the shade, go out back in the supply room, and drink the cleaning liquids there. He didn't WANT to do that shit, especially since that shit kills. But...ever since that encounter with that...thing last night, he didn't feel so well.

Hell, he didn't even feel like himself.

He's drinking this shit, he's sweating like a pig, he wore more to the pool than he usually does, and he became hyper-aware of his heartbeat. But that thing kept telling him one thing: that he needed to build. Build what? But whatever the hell that meant...for some reason, he wants to do it. He doesn't REALLY want to do it, but he wants to anyway. It was like he was possessed...by that thing. What it did to him last night...

Speaking of last night, that thing totally made him stand up on his "private lessons" with Stacey. Shit. He knew she would be pissed at him for it. If she were here, he would have to avoid her, no matter what. Yeah...avoid her. He looks and feels like shit and he doesn't want her to deal with that.

When he finally got out, it just so happens that it was his turn to look over the pool. However, his sight was hazy and more flickery. Not only that, he felt like he was melting under the sun, even though it wasn't over 100 today. Its light was also blinding to him, making him shield his eyes at direct contact. His hearing makes the cries and screams of joy and delight sound more awful than usual.

"Looking good, Billy," Heather, his fellow lifeguard, said, chewing her gum and smiling at him as she walked by. Her voice sounded like an echo to him.

When he looked at the moms he usually flirts with, they all looked at him flirtatiously like they did before and greeted, "Afternoon, Billy." Their voices were like echoes too. Goddamn it, what the hell was wrong with him?

When he got to the lifeguard stand, he felt a little better, him sighing in relief. The sunlight still blinded his sight, but he'd just have to deal with it until he finds some sunglasses. Just go along as usual...just go along as usual...

---

**Stopping right here. How was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

So I made Hopper not lie through his teeth, but be vague as hell with Joyce about what's happened. Of course, in this AU, lying's gonna do nothing but blow up in his face, but I'm sure that he wouldn't want to tell her the truth either. It comes off as less manipulative, I hope.

Since in Suspicious Minds, Andrew and his friends are practically hippies and anti-government, why not have Dave lead the protest? Andrew would join, but there's the matter of Terry...and maybe something else...

Again, it was fun writing the talks Lucas and Max give to Mike and Jane back-to-back! Both of them are perfect together in the sense that they give their respective friends not-so-good advice. xD And you guys know about Will. But at least they'll cheer them up...with the mall...

I hope you guys enjoyed the small Kali, Steve, and Dustin conversation. At least she doesn't think Dustin is lying and they were open to the possibility of the rats and Russians being connected.

Yeah, Terry was giving Stacey advice about Billy, but I made it clear that she wasn't that open about a woman around her age having plans with an 18-year-old. However, she likes her as a friend, so I made her decide not to judge her because of that situation.

Since Thanksgiving Break is here, I can have more time writing chapters! So review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you in the next one!

## 58. Let's Change That Right Now!

Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!

---

Kali drove her car all the way to Doris Driscoll's house. When she saw Jonathan near his car, she parked near its left side, stopping the engine and getting out. "How long have you been waiting?" she asked him.

"Not long," he answered before the two walked together to the woman's doorstep.

"Did you talk to her yet?"

He shook his head. "No."

She sighed before knocking on the door, the two teens hearing some light jazz playing in the house. A few seconds later, a small elderly woman with round glasses, a flower-printed shirt, and light pants opened the door, her answering, "Yes?"

Kali put on a friendly face and asked, "Are you Doris Driscoll?"

The woman nodded and answered, "Yes."

She smiled. "Hi there, Mrs. Driscoll. I'm Kali, Kali Ives. We spoke briefly on the phone last night." She then pointed at Jonathan with her thumb. "This is my friend, Jonathan Byers." He smiled and waved at her a little. "We're both from Hawkins Post."

Doris's cautious face turned into a relieved one in an instant. "Oh, yes! Yes! Oh my goodness." She then looked at the two of them. "You two look quite young to be reporters." She then giggled.

The two looked at each other, then plastered on nervous smiles. "We...get that a lot," Jonathan replied.

She giggled again and opened the door wide. "Well, come on in." And so they did, Kali closing the door behind them.

They both looked around, seeing a modest setting for a home like hers, with lace curtains, wooden walls and ceiling, and flower-printed cushions on a skeletal couch. Kali smiled. "It's a lovely little home you got here."

"Oh, thank you, dear," Doris said, chuckling.

She then looked at the elder as she pulled out her notepad and pen, opening it up. "Do you live here alone?"

She turned to her and nodded again. "Yes. Jack, my husband, passed away..." She looked away thoughtful. "What was it?" She then raised her voice to say, "Ten years ago."

Both her and Jonathan looked solemn. "Oh, I'm so sorry to hear that."

"Oh, don't be. I kinda like the quiet." She then stopped and faced them both. "At least, I did." She then opened it, revealing it to be the way to the basement. "This way!" She then descended down the stairs. Kali and Jonathan looked down to see that it was dark, then looked at each other and shrugged, descending down with her.

She turned on the lights with a string, dimly lighting the place up as she lead them and pointed to a certain spot. "It's right over there." The teens then walked over to a bunch of ripped out and spilled fertilizer. Kali crouched down and grabbed one bag, seeing torn holes and the information on it. "You see those little teeth marks there?"

The Indian girl flinched when Jonathan took a picture, her looking at him before he shot her an apologetic look. She put it down and wrote on her notepad. "So...these bags." She stood up and faced Doris. "Are you sure they were full before?"

"I'm old, not senile, honey," she replied. "I brought them over from Blackburn's Supplies last Tuesday." She nodded and wrote that down. "Now, you tell me, why would rats want to eat a poor old lady's fertilizer?"

Kali looked a little curious. "Are you sure that they did though?" Doris didn't look so happy to hear that question. "Because it's possible they just gnawed at the bag. Them eating it seems-"

"Crazy, I know, honey, believe me," she interrupted. Jonathan stood up, looking at her curiously too. She sighed. "But...something's just not right with these rats."

"How, exactly?" Kali walked towards them. "How are they 'not right'?"

The old woman shrugged. "I would guess rabies." Kali wrote that down. "That's when I said to myself, 'Doris, you gotta call the paper, because if those diseased rats are on the loose, the people outta know.' Wouldn't you agree?" She nodded at her, Jonathan looking a little skeptical.

A sudden crashing sound against some kind of metal made the both of them tense up and look at the direction that came from. The old woman's face lit up. "Oh! That's right, I forgot to mention!" She gestured them to follow her. "Come over here." Looking at each other with wide eyes, they followed her to the laundry room, her standing a few feet away from what looked like a covered cage as it began thudding around. Holding her wrist and looking proud, she stated, "I caught one of the little bastards." Garbled squeaking was heard as the rat inside continued hitting the cage to try and escape. The two looked at this sight with more widened eyes, thinking that this story got a little more deeper than they thought...

---

Dave was still leading the protest, now chanting, "Who's responsible for this?!"

"Kline the Swine!" the crowd chanted back.

"Who's to blame?!"

"Kline the Swine!"

"Who do we want out?!"

"Kline the Swine!"

...

As Jim sat waiting and saw a weird-looking biker walk through, he swore that those protestors couldn't be any more annoying. He knew



they were protesting for a good cause, but damn, do their chants get old quick.

---

Since Lucas's bike didn't have any support for a second passenger, Mike had to get on Will's bike as the three boys biked towards the mall. Once they've arrived, Mike got off and the boys parked their bikes. The freckled one stared up at the building in awe. He also saw so many people come and go into the building, making him feel quite nervous.

Lucas smiled and clapped his hands together, looking at him. "So, what d'ya think?" he asked him.

He gulped and answered, "Too many people." Lucas and Will looked at him weird. "It's against the rules."

Will sighed and said to Lucas, "I told you we shouldn't go here."

His friend scoffed and wrapped his hand around Mike's shoulders. "Dude, loosen up a little. There are a TON of places here you wouldn't get to anywhere else." He motioned a spread with his arm. "The arcade moved in here, there are also stores you can get new clothes at, all kinds of food! There's a whole buncha cool shit in here! All you need to do is get inside and enjoy it all with your boys." Will huffed, looked away, and crossed his arms, not looking forward to spending any more time with his crush's boyfriend.

Smiling, Mike looked at the mall again. It was against the rules, but with the way how Lucas described it, it could be really fun. Maybe once, just this once, he'll break the rules. Besides, unlike before, there was NO way his father could know he was here, right?

He looked at Lucas, still smiling, and replied, "Let's go."

Lucas smiled back at him and gave his back a pat, the two going in before he shouted at Will, "Come on, Will!" The boy mentioned groaned, rolled his eyes, and went in, surely unable to break away from this.

...

Carl's car parked in one spot and he, Becky, Jane, and Max came out. Becky got out a stroller and put Tina in it. Once they were all set, they walked towards the mall. "Wow," Becky said, her and Carl looking impressed. "This is a nice-looking mall."

"Yeah, especially for a place like Hawkins," Carl added.

"I know, right?" Max replied. "It's practically a paradise."

Becky laughed. "Sure, for you kids."

Jane looked back at her aunt. "Are there malls in Indianapolis?"

She and her husband nodded. "Oh yeah, sweetie. There's a quite a few, actually."

"Not surprised, since it's a city," the redhead commented.

She chuckled before her niece asked, "Have you guys gone to any of them?"

"I went to Castleton Square Mall. It's HUGE."

Jane looked quite interested. "Bigger than this?" She pointed back at the mall.

The two nodded again. "And it's wider too," Carl added.

The girls looked at each other, awed. "Dude, imagine this mall was 2x wider!"

"Imagine if it was 10x wider!"

"That would be PARADISE!" The two looked giddy once again, clearly enjoying each other's company. Becky couldn't help but smile at the girls.

Carl leaned over and whispered in her ear, "Looks like it's working out well, honey. Jane's clearly more happy."

Becky nodded, watching her niece enthusiastically talk with her female friend. "I'm glad she is."

...

Once the boys got into the middle of the lobby, Mike looked around in awe. He saw so many people and so many different stores. There were escalators and a lot of differently-colored lights. This was a lot bigger and more diverse than he thought it was. He liked it.

"So, where to first?" Lucas asked before looking like he had a change in thought. "Actually..." He eyed Mike for a bit, the dark-haired boy looking at him.

"What?" he asked.

"How about we get you some kickass clothes first?"

Mike and Will looked at him weird. "What's wrong with my clothes?"

He shook his head. "Nothing. It's just that wearing a pair of fresh, new clothes can feel real good." Mike smiled.

"Well, where are we gonna find new clothes for him?" Will asked.

Lucas looked around before spotting The Gap. He pointed there. "Let's see what's in there." The boys then went inside...at the same time as Andrew was. He was dressed in a Grateful Dead tie-dye shirt, jean shorts, and brown strapped sandals. He spotted Terry checking out some new clothes from the left of the store.

Mike froze up when he saw her, though she didn't seem him due to her attention to the clothing. "Terry," he muttered before Lucas and Will stopped.

"What?" the African-American boy asked.

He pointed at her. "Terry's here." The boys then looked at Terry, their eyes widened.

"Shit," Lucas muttered before he had him hide behind some jeans.

Stacey, who was wandering around as a store guide now, saw that and looked weirded-out by it. However, she shrugged and spotted Andrew taking a deep breath. He looked at her and she gestured him

to go on and do what he must, giving him a reassuring look. He smiled at her before walking straight to her.

"Afternoon, Terry," he greeted, startling her and making her turn.

She looked more relaxed, but also surprised to see him. "Andrew," she replied, smiling a little. "Hi. I..." She shook her head, letting go of the shirt she was checking out. "...I didn't expect to see you here."

He shrugged, keeping a friendly face. "You did mention that you work with Stacey here."

She chuckled. "Yeah, I did, didn't I?" He smiled at her and she smiled back at him. "Are you visiting her?"

The boys, peering through the gap of the jean hangers, looked very puzzled by the two talking to each other. "Who the hell is that?" Lucas whispered.

Mike shook his head. "I don't know," he answered.

"He doesn't look like an employee," Will stated.

"No shit. He's a hippy. Just look at him."

The freckled boy looked at his African-American friend. "Hippy? What's that?"

As the boys continued whispering to each other, Stacey became a lot more suspicious. What the hell were these boys doing exactly? Not having a good feeling about it, she walked towards the boys and said, "Excuse me." The boys turned to her, looking like deers in the headlights. "Can I help you boys with anything?"

At first, none of them said anything, Mike getting out a, "Uh..."

Lucas then looked relaxed and held his friend's shoulder, having the boy look at him for a second. "We're just looking for something this guy should wear." Mike nodded and so did Will.

She sighed and eyed Mike for a few seconds. Working in fashion had made her keep an eye on everyone's fashion sense. That was

something she was sorry, but not sorry for having. She quirked her mouth to the right and gestured them to follow her. "Come on." And so they followed her to the "Guys" section of the store.

...

Jane, Max, Becky, Carl, and Tina finally arrived at the main lobby of the mall. They all looked around, the adults a little impressed with how it looks. The girls then faced the adults, Becky saying loudly, "Now, don't get into any trouble, girls." She looked at Jane specifically. "Your uncle, cousin, and I'll take a look around. You two always stay together, okay?" They both nodded at her.

Carl leaned down to her and whispered, "Do you think leaving these girls alone is a good idea?"

She clicked her tongue and whispered back to him, "Don't worry, I got it." He nodded before she faced the girls again, giving the stroller to her husband and pulling out her wallet. She then gave the girls thirty dollars in bills. "Here, in case you girls wanna buy something!" They both smiled wide and looked at the woman, getting back to her husband's side again. "We meet here every hour to check in, alright? If you guys want to get out, just tell us when we meet again!"

They both nodded, Jane replying, "Okay, Auntie!"

"You got it, Becky!" Max also replied.

Becky smiled and turned around, pushing the stroller away. "Have fun, girls!"

"Stay safe!" Carl added, the three leaving together.

The girls waved them goodbye before looking around. "So, where do ya wanna go shopping?"

Jane looked at her weird. "Shopping?"

Max looked at her like what she said was common knowledge. "Yeah. Where should we go shop?"

The brown-haired girl bared her teeth before shaking her head. "I

never...really went shopping before."

Her friend's jaw dropped. "What?!" She nodded nervously before she took her hand. "Then let's change that right now!" With a pull of her hand, Jane had followed Max to JCPenny's, unaware that they passed The Gap, where her mom...and other friends were.

...

Meanwhile, Terry and Andrew were still talking to each other, clearly enjoying each other's company. The long-haired man then sighed and said, "You know what, I'm just gonna ask now." The dirty-blond-haired woman looked curious, raising an eyebrow. Looking a bit humble, he asked her in a low voice, "You wanna get out and talk some more?"

She looked a little shocked at that question. For a few seconds, she didn't know what to say. She'd love to, but...

She nervously smiled at him. "I'm still working."

He nodded. "I know." He shoved his hands into his pockets. "But...maybe you can tell Stacey to cover for you, then we can go."

He's right, she could. In fact, today wasn't a fine day for her. Jane got into a really bad argument with Mike (and she hoped that she feels alright after that), she was really mad at Hopper for not talking to Mike and screwing the plan up, she had to give advice to her friend who was seeing a guy as old as Kali's boyfriend, and the rest of the day was uneventful and not happy. Maybe going with Andrew and hanging out a bit would make her feel a lot better today. Yeah...she took risks before, why stop now?

She smiled and looked around for Stacey.

The curly-haired woman was showcasing some new shirts to the boys, specifically Mike. These came in many different colors and were printed with different patterns, even a cartoon pattern on one of them. "These just came in," she began explaining. "But from the look of you, I think these shirts would fit. You seem like a reserved kid ready to break out of your shell."

Mike smiled at the shirts, nodding a little since that was what Lucas told him. Lucas nodded as well, saying, "That's exactly him, m'am."

Stacey then looked down at the freckled boy. "You see anything you like?"

A little puzzled, he looked up at her. "How do I know...what I like?" Lucas and Will looked a little panicked from him asking that.

She gave him a bit of a weird look before looking back at the shirts hanging up and crossing her arms. "Well, you try these on and see if they look good on you." She moved her hand back and forth from her chest. "These must feel like...you, y'know?"

"Like...me?"

She looked at him and gave him a nod. "Yeah, and just you. No one else." He looked understanding of that, looking back at the shirts. Something about them just appealed to his eye and it must be something that feels like him. Not Jane, not the boys...just him.

From the corner of her eye, she spotted Terry and Andrew looking at her, her coworker waving a hand at her to grab her attention. She mouthed, "Can you cover for me?"

Smiling big, she nodded and mouthed back, "Of course." With that, the two happily got out of the store. She knew those two were going to hit it off. Besides, Andrew kinda needed someone special in his life. And from talking to Terry, she needed someone special too. She was sure that those two were going to hit it off instantly, she just knew it.

"Stacey?" asked Mike.

She broke from her thoughts and looked at him. "Yes?"

He pointed at the shirts. "I want to try all of these on."

She nodded at him, pointing at the mirror on the same wall as the shirts. "The mirror's over there." She then pointed at the dressing rooms at the back. "If you don't want that, the dressing rooms are over there."

Mike nodded, him saying, "Thank you."

She smiled at him and replied, "No problem." She then left, seeing that one of her teenage coworkers was having a bit of trouble with the cash register. She sighed and walked over to help her.

Mike and Lucas looked at each other with grins as they took the clothes and ran to the male dressing room. Will sighed, clearly unenthusiastic about this.

...

Jane and Max got out of JCPenny's empty-handed, the brown-haired girl saying, "That place was boring."

Max shrugged. "Sorry." They then looked at The Gap, stopping there and looking at it.

Jane held up a finger to point at it. "This is where Mama works at."

Max looked surprised at that. "Really?"

She nodded. "Yeah."

"Maybe you'll get a family discount in there! Come on!" They both then got inside and looked around for Jane's mother, not seeing her anywhere, much to their surprise.

Stacey saw the girls wandering around, so she went up to them and said, "Hello, girls." They turned and looked up at her. "Can I help you two with anything?"

"Um..." Jane started. "Where's Terry Ives?"

She gave her a weird look. "Who's asking?"

"Her daughter, Jane."

Her face lit up in surprise and delight. "Oh, you're her younger daughter!" The girl smiled bashfully and nodded at her. She then sighed. "Well, she's...taking a bathroom break." Both Jane and Max looked a little disappointed.



"Oh."

Stacey tried to reassure them with a smile. "But hey! Feel free to look around." She spread her arms, looking around the store. "I'm sure she'll be here sometime soon."

The girls nodded, Max saying, "Thank you..." She looked at the woman's name-tag. "Stacey."

"Not a problem." She then let them be, still feeling delighted to meet her friend's daughter! That was much to her surprise, since she normally hated kids. But it was her friend's daughter, so there was no way she would treat her badly. She guessed that redhead must be her friend. She wondered how her new friend would react to this.

The girls then looked around at the "Girls" section of the store, checking some shirts, hats, and pants. And then Jane looked up at a blue shirt on display at a table sunglasses, purple pants, a pink cap, and another specially-decorated shirt. The blue shirt had red, white, and white paint streaks on it. Max smiled at her and asked, "You like that one?"

For some reason, she kinda did, her nodding and answering, "Yeah." Her face then fell a little. "But..." The redhead looked concerned. "I don't know if it'll look good on me or not."

Her female friend shrugged and replied, "Just try it on and see if you like it."

She looked at her curiously. "Should I?"

She gave her an encouraging look. "Of course! What you wear is something that should make YOU feel good and like, well, YOU." She pointed at her, the brown-haired girl looking up at the shirt again. "What anyone else says about that doesn't matter. If you like it, wear it." She agreed completely on that. For as long as she could remember, she had always gravitated more to boys' clothes. She just always liked them and felt like herself when she wore them. Other girls, like Stacy from school, never really liked her for that. Boys like Troy and James from 7th grade didn't like her for that either. But at the end of the day, it didn't matter, because that's what she likes to

wear and that's that.

But this was the first time she's ever gravitated towards more feminine clothing. The boys and probably Mike would give her weird looks for it, but she genuinely liked the look of this shirt...and a few others she and Max checked out, so what they would think about that wouldn't matter. She wanted to try this and a few other outfits on to see if she really did want to wear them out.

...

While walking around and talking, Andrew and Terry started to talk about the three, how they met, and their relationship now. "I've known Dave since we were REAL little," he said to her. "We were those type of kids who liked wrestling in mud and do one of those..." He looked down and chuckled, shaking his head. "One of THOSE pranks on neighbors."

Terry looked curious. "What? What is it?" she asked.

He sighed and whispered it to her, making her jaw drop in disgust. "Oh my God, that's DISGUSTING!"

The long-haired man laughed. "I know. We were dirty and gross kids back then. We grew past that in high school."

She nodded, smiling a little and enjoying getting to know Andrew better than before. "And Stacey?"

"We met senior year, actually. She was a new girl from Fort Wayne and moved all the way to Bloomington." Terry nodded again, looking interested. "I remember trying to talk to her as a new friend, but she always ignored me and tried to hang out with other girls." He grinned. "Then one day, I see her alone outside the school building, singing a Beatles song." She grinned with him. "I sang along with her and skipped class with her."

Terry raised up her eyebrows. "Oh really?"

He nodded at her. "Yeah, we talked about the Beatles and other musicians we loved at the time, then we became friends from there. I introduced her to Dave and we stuck together ever since."

The dirty-blonde-haired woman kept his smile at him, seeing the happy, nostalgic face he had on his face. To be honest with herself, every time he does look happy...he looked kind of cute.

Another question popped up in her head and she wondered if it was good for her to ask him that. She didn't want to scare him away or anything...

He turned to her and asked, "You got friends too, right?"

She was almost surprised by that sudden question, but laughed as a way to shrug it off. "If we're not counting my sister..." Andrew chuckled. "Joyce."

He nodded. "Oh yeah, that one high school friend you told me about before."

She nodded back at him. "Yeah."

"How did you meet her?"

She looked thoughtful for a few seconds, memories resurging for her. "We always attended the same schools together, but we were so different and our minds were in different places at those times, so we didn't even bother talking to each other." Andrew nodded in understanding. "Then, in freshman year of high school, we were in the same science class and we were seated right next to each other. The teacher paired us up for an experiment and neither of us were looking forward to it. However, we had fun with it, even if Joyce screwed up a few things." She smiled and giggled a little, making Andrew smile as well and think that...her giggle was cute. "Then we started talking to each other about stuff."

"What kind of stuff?"

She shrugged. "Just what we like to do and what our lives are like. We've decided to finally be friends when she stood up for me after a bunch of girls picked on me for being...well...nerdy."

The long-haired man scoffed. "Nothing wrong with being smart."

She chuckled. "Right? Anyway, she stood up for me and we finally

decided to be friends and do what friends do, like hang out and support each other." She looked up at her new guy friend. "As you know, we're still friends to this day."

He continued smiling at her. "Sounds like Joyce is a strong woman and friend."

She nodded again. "She is. We've had our little problems and we did grow apart at one point..." She looked away from him again, smiling once more. "But we're still going strong and acting like friends do." It was like Terry had her own Stacey. He felt good about that. Everyone needed a friend like that. They then continued to talk more.

---

While Jonathan unsuccessfully attempts to take a photo of the diseased and rabid rat, Kali was calling the place where Doris got her fertilizer with the woman's home phone. She had a phonebook with her, so she was quick to find their number. When they answered, she cleared her throat and greeted, "Yes, hi. This is Kali Ives from The Hawkins Post." She paused her the reply and then said, "So, I'm going to ask you a bit of a weird question." She paused again and moved around a little, hearing the voice. "Have you guys gotten any recent calls about...rabid rats?" She paused again to hear the answer. Doris was in the small kitchen, making some lemonade. She shook her head and held the handset. "No, no, RABID rats. Rats with rabies."

She looked defeated when she heard the answer to that, shutting her eyes and drawing her lips to a flat line for a bit before opening them up. "Okay." She moved back to the spot she was before. "Then what about rats in general?" She listened to the answer, leaning forward against a small table in front of her. "Uh-huh..." She nodded as she heard more. "Okay. Thank you for answering." She hung up the phone, sighing.

"You're quite like Nancy Drew, aren't ya?" Doris asked with a tall glass of lemonade, approaching her. Kali turned to her and put on a smile. She then offered her the glass. "You want lemonade? It's freshly-squeezed."

She felt happy about that. Her mother always gave her and Jane freshly-squeezed lemonade, so she took it and answered, "Of course."

Thank you." She took a sip, feeling refreshed and liking the natural taste. She sighed blissfully and told her, "This is good."

Doris gave her a cute smile. "Aw, thanks, honey."

She took a deep breath and asked her, "Do you mind if I just make a few more calls?"

"Not at all. Feel free. I enjoy the company." She nodded at her as she left. She set the glass down at the table and flipped to another page, seeing Blackburn's ad on there. Maybe if she called them...

...

Giddy, Kali went downstairs and said, "Hey, Jonathan." He looked back, her noticing the rat laying down and not making any more noise. She looked a bit curious. "The hell's wrong with it now?"

Her friend shrugged and looked back at it. "I don't know," he answered. "I think there's something really wrong with it."

She shook her head and continued with a smile, "Anyway, I finally got a lead."

He looked back at her plainly. "Cool."

She looked a little puzzled at his reaction, but then demanded, "Let's go. We don't have much time." She then bolted back up without him having a chance to say anything else. He sighed deeply and grabbed his camera, going up with her...and leaving the stiff and pained rat alone.

---

**I'll stop here. How was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**I hope it isn't weird for the boys to go clothes shopping like the girls are clearly doing. Like Lucas said, wearing new clothes can make boys feel good! I also hope you liked my little backstory on how Terry and Joyce became friends in this AU!**

**Review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter**

**(which is actually going to be centric on what happens in the mall)!**

**P.S.: If you're celebrating it, Happy Thanksgiving!**

## 59. I Dump Your Ass!

**Here's the next chapter! Enjoy!**

---

When the girls got into the "Girls" dressing room, the boys got out of the "Guys" dressing room. They looked at the mirror, Mike wearing a warm-colored striped shirt. The freckled boy himself looked at the mirror, checking side to side if it looked good on him. Lucas nodded while Will did not participate at all before they went back inside the dressing room to have him try another one.

Just then, the girls came out. Jane looked herself in the mirror, wearing the blue shirt with the red, white, and yellow streaks with yellow pants and red suspenders. She smiled at how she looked before Max handed her a yellow french beanie to fit. She put it on straight before Max tilted it. The tomboy thought she looked better. She then posed like a cheesy model, making her female friend giggle. She then stretched out her suspenders before snapping them back, making her huff in excitement before she and Max went back into their dressing room for her to try out another one.

The boys came out again, Mike wearing a white, short-sleeved shirt with turquoise and salmon paint streaks on it. He checked himself out in it like he did before, Lucas shaking his head and when he looked at Will, he just shrugged and that made them go back. Jane and Max came out, the brown-haired girl looking at herself in a matching shirt and skirt she was surprised she didn't feel uncomfortable in. They were both white and had red, blue, purple, and yellow streaks on it. Max gave her the choice of a yellow or red belt, her choosing yellow and putting it on. Her friend twirled her around to showcase it, the girls clearly having fun before they went in again.

While Mike looked at himself wearing a tropical-patterned shirt with the colors to match, Lucas checked out some sunglasses he could purchase for himself. The red ones didn't fit him, so he didn't like that. Jane checked herself out in a warm-colored collared shirt and jean shorts while Max checked out a completely black pair of sunglasses available. They just weren't for her. Mike checked himself out in another shirt and Lucas didn't like how a certain style of

sunglasses looked on him. Same happened with Jane and Max, the redhead looking weird about the colorful pair she had.

Finally, Lucas found a pair of completely black sunglasses that he liked, grinning and nodding before looking at Mike. He wore the cartoon-patterned shirt and grinned at himself, loving how he looked in it. He looked at Lucas, who grinned as well and nodded, giving a thumbs-up. They both then looked at Will, who actually got a good look on him. He'll admit, he did look good in it, so he gave him a nod. The two smiled before they went back to the dressing room to get everything ready. The girls came out, Jane dressed in a black romper with brightly-colored patterns, her hair messy from the fun she was having with Max. She adjusted it to make it look a little more out there, most of her hair on one side, before checking herself out. She looked how she looked and Max did too! They went back to their dressing room to get everything ready.

The boys got out and went to the cash register, where Stacey was operating right now. They placed the shirts and the sunglasses in front of her, the woman smiling as she checked their price tags to punch in. Mike and Lucas were smiling before she added up the total and said, "\$22.15." Their smiles dropped, looking like they were hit by lightning. Mike looked at Lucas, who dug into his pockets and pulled out three dollars and twenty-three cents, though there were more coins and he had only a dollar. They looked at Will, him muttering, "I don't have any money." Looking defeated, the African-American boy placed the money he had in front of her. She looked at the boys with a quirked-up eyebrow. Lucas smiled nervously and said, "Sorry, we came here...unprepared."

She sighed before she looked around to see if anyone was watching her. She was about to do something she saw a cashier at a diner did for her, Andrew, and Dave when they didn't have enough money to pay for their meal. Quickly, she got out her wallet and pulled out the money they needed to pay, putting it in the cash register. The boys looked absolutely shocked that she was doing this. "Are you-" Lucas was asking before she shushed him and put the money in. He cleared his throat and murmured, "Sorry."

She pushed the money Lucas had back to him and got a bag to put the shirts in before she whispered to them, "If I see your faces here



again, you owe me that much money."

They gulped, but nodded. "Okay. Thanks!" They then got the bag and went back to the dressing room for a final time so Mike could change into one of his new shirts...just as the girls came out to purchase what they had with their money.

They went to the cash register, Stacey smiling at them before checking the price tags on the clothes and sunglasses. "Found everything alright?" she asked them.

"Yeah!" Jane answered cheerfully.

"Of course," Max also answered.

"Is there...a family discount, by any chance?"

Stacey looked at the girl, answering, "Sorry, but no." Both her smile and Max's dropped before the woman gave them a reassuring smile. "But these are marked down for discounts." They smiled again, looking very happy.

As Stacey gave them the final price and they joint-paid for the clothes, the boys got out of the store, Mike and Lucas looking confident in their new looks. Will looked like he just wanted to go home.

When the curly-haired woman put the clothes in a bag, Jane asked her, "When my Mama comes back, can you tell her I said hi?"

The fact that she called Terry Mama was both weird and cute to her. She nodded at her and gave her the bag, Max grabbing her sunglasses and removing the tag on them. "Of course," she answered.

She smiled at her again. "Thank you, Stacey." She then took the bag and they left, giggling and having fun. They linked arms and loved each other's company. Stacey had to admire the fact that her youngest daughter didn't seem like a piece of shit as most girls her age were. She was lucky to have a daughter like that. The boys she treated also weren't too bad either, reminding her of Andrew and Dave back when they were all friends.

...

They met up with Becky, Carl, and Tina in the middle of the mall, them smiling before the woman noticed the shopping bag Jane had in her free hand. "I'm assumin' you two are having a lot of fun?" she asked.

They nodded and answered, "Yes!"

She chuckled before she heard Tina crying. Carl got out a pacifier and gave it to her, the baby girl being quiet. He turned to the girls. "Anything weird happened?" he asked, the two shaking their heads as an answer.

"Alright, then have fun!" They then went about their business, the adults happy that the girls were safe and having fun. However, they needed to go to the ladies' bathroom since Tina was crying.

...

Andrew and Terry were still walking and talking, being a long way from the Gap. The long-haired man was telling her a story, saying, "So we were all just running as fast as we could. We didn't care that it was raining and the dirt was getting muddy. We had to get away from Old Man Dusenheir's home quick before he could spot us."

"So how did that prank go?" the dirty-blonde-haired woman asked.

"We all heard him yell, 'Who the hell did this on my property?!' I swear, he's got amazing lungs for an 75-year-old." She snickered since from what he told her about that old man, he deserved it.

They walked pass the arcade, which had moved into the mall from its previous location. The boys had arrived there, Mike looking awed at the setting. The games practically lit up the entire place like lights in a city and it was all just so colorful. Even the floor had fun patterns. The boys looked around for a game to play before Mike spotted the Pac-Man machine. From what he saw, it looked like it could be fun. Lucas got right next to him and asked, "You wanna play? It's a fun game."

He nodded before asking him, "How do you play?"

Will, who didn't seem happy about hanging out with Mike at first, suddenly answered, "Well, you move the joystick around and get all the dots in this maze and also avoid the ghosts in that maze." He realized what he did, wanting to regret it before Mike looked like he understood. Lucas got out a quarter and inserted it into the machine, the boys looking at the screen intently as Mike grabbed the joystick like he's held it before.

...

Jane and Max run together, still linking arms before they spotted a photo studio. Max smiled and looked at Jane, gesturing her to come in. She nodded and they went in. In no time, they had a flamboyant photographer and over-the-top fancy outfits to try on. They then posed with their hands on their cheeks, showing off their sides and being back-to-back. A picture was taken.

...

Lucas and Will were not prepared for how much of a pro Mike was at Pac-Man already, though he was on his last life. Still, they began to be hyped as Mike was on the 9th level already. "Come on, come on..." Lucas murmured as Mike got consumable that rendered the ghosts vulnerable.

"Oh!" exclaimed Will.

"Get 'em, get 'em!" Lucas also exclaimed, Mike doing that and getting the dots as well.

...

Jane then leaned against Max, her arms folded and on her shoulders, then a picture was taken. They were laughing before the photographer told them to get a wardrobe change.

...

On the 11th level, Mike was close to finishing the level before he got cornered by ghosts and got caught by them, the boys exclaiming in annoyance as it was game over. Mike groaned and moved away from the machine. "Stupid ghosts," he grumbled.

"You'll get better next time, pal," Lucas stated, patting his back. "But you were pretty good for a first-timer."

Will had to agree, nodding and adding, "Yeah, it's like you knew what to do straight away." Not even the telekinetic boy himself knew how he knew what to do straight away, but he was glad he did.

"Thanks, guys."

Will then spotted Centipede and pointed at that. "Well...how about you play this game?" he suggested. The boys looked at the machine and went to it to have him play it.

...

In new clothes, Jane and Max did more cheesy posing, the brown-haired girl looking like she's about to faint while Max held up the collar of her jacket and posed on her side, a picture of that being taken.

...

It took a bit for Mike to get used to the gameplay before he and the boys really got into it, killing the bugs coming his way. "You're doing great!" Lucas exclaimed cheerfully. Seeing this actually reminded Will of when...he and the rest of the boys watched Jane play the game. The enthusiasm, the way they played and focused on the screen...

Wait, why was MIKE, his crush's BOYFRIEND, reminding him of HER?!

He broke out of his train of thought as Mike and Lucas let out a cry as Mike lost a life.

...

Once they were done with Centipede, they moved onto Dig Dug, Mike looking very focused on digging his way out. Lucas kept his attention on the screen while Will's mood was ruined due to that flashback and comparison he had before. He still wondered why that happened...

...

And then once the boys were done with Dig Dug, they started playing Donkey Kong on Lucas's last quarter. Mike and Lucas got more intense about him getting to the princess on his last life while their auburn-haired friend tried to be the same to forget about that small little moment. Mike had barely dodged a flame, and then a barrel, and reached to the princess, the boys cheering at those close calls.

...

"Shake it! Shake your heads for me!" the photographer cheerfully told them. They did so, messing up their hair and clothes in the process. That photo was taken. The two had an absolute blast doing this, especially Jane. She had no idea what she was missing.

...

While Becky and Carl looked in a candle store, Carl strolling Tina around this time, the short-haired woman suddenly heard Terry's voice. Curious, she looked out of the store...seeing her sister talk to a long-haired man. Her eyes widened. Shouldn't she be at work? Well, what the hell's work when you can hang out with a friend, right? She wondered which one that was, although she's got a pretty good idea...

"Honey?" her husband asked, making her look at him.

"Oh, yes?" she replied.

He held a scented candle to her and said, "Smell this." She leaned over and smelled it. It smelled like fall leaves, reminding her of how much she had fun playing in the leaves as a kid and dragging Terry into them too.

She smiled and closed her eyes for a few seconds, saying, "I love it."

He smiled back at her. "I knew you would." Carl was mostly reserved and professional, but he was a real romantic when it comes to Becky specifically. Although they have their little problems and differences, she knew she was in love with the right man.

...

"And then in the cafeteria, during lunch, the doors suddenly burst open and there he was," Terry said, telling a story to him now. "Jerry Fitzgerald, cocky jock, drunk out of his mind, in NOTHING but his underwear!"

Andrew laughed. "You serious?!"

"Yes! And he didn't look so good in it either!" That made him laugh louder. "Becky and I spat out our milk, but Joyce..." She laughed a little. "Oh my God, I don't know how she made it possible, but milk came out her mouth AND her nose!"

His eyes widened at that. "Both?!"

"Yeah! It made the whole thing funnier!" They both then laughed together.

...

After Mike lost in Donkey Kong, the boys got out of the arcade, Mike sighing and saying, "That little flame thing's such a pain."

Lucas patted his shoulder and nodded in understanding. "I know, dude, I know."

Will took a deep breath, muttering to himself, "Mike's not Jane, Mike's not Jane, Mike's not Jane..."

"What?" Mike asked, him and Lucas looking at him.

Feeling embarrassed, he gave him a half-assed smile and replied, "Oh, nothing. Trust me." They were a bit concerned, but decided that it was nothing and looked forward.

Bright pink caught the corner of Mike's eye, him looking at a...lingerie store. His face flushed red at what he saw in there, his heart racing just a little. Lucas noticed this and laughed, holding his friend's far shoulder. "Come on, dude." Feel a bit embarrassed, Mike stopped blushing and looked forward. The auburn-haired boy narrowed his eyes at him. He swore, if he imagined Jane in one of those things...

Not that he's never done it before...but still, that's ADULT WOMAN stuff! He wasn't right to think of her that way and Mike shouldn't think of her that way either!

...

Now in an expensive shoe store, Max helped Jane try to walk in heels. Now she knows that heels weren't her thing, since this felt uncomfortable for her. Suddenly, she tripped and fell on the ground, letting out a cry before laughter ensued. Max laughed with her. They both then saw Stacy, the girl from school that didn't like her, and her clique look at them in disgust and annoyance. They both decided not to care about what they think and continued laughing, Jane taking off her heels and going to get her shoes back on.

They left the store, Max holding Jane's hand again as she carried the shopping bag now, and said, "See?! There's more to life than stupid boys!" At the moment, she agreed with that. She and the boys had fun times, sure, but having fun with Max like this...there was more to her life than hanging out with them after all.

...

Stacy and her clique had also left that place, Mike and Lucas talking to each other cheerfully before Mike bumped into Stacy, making her gasp and look at him, annoyed. "Ew, nerd," she said before she and her clique walked away, giggling.

Mike and the boys looked back at her, muttering, "Mouth-breather."

Lucas's eyes twinkled as he thought of one idea, grinning mischievously.

...

The boys hid behind a pillar to get a good look at the clique, Will whispering, "What if we get caught?"

"We won't if we get the hell out after," Lucas answered. The auburn-haired boy sighed while his friend added, "Besides, Stacy's always been a bitch to us and she's a bitch to Mike." He shook his head as they peered out, seeing the clique talking with orange drinks in their

hands. "Okay, now."

Mike tilted his head down and concentrated his power on Stacy's drink. He then tilted his head up, making her drink explode. She and the clique gasped as large drops of orange juice landed on them. Mike looked awed, Will looked shocked, and Lucas tried his damndest to suppress his laughter. They then got away quick before anyone could get suspicious.

"Isn't hanging out with the boys great, Mike?!" Lucas asked happily.

He hasn't had this much fun...ever, really. He and Jane did fun stuff at home, sure, but this was on another level. "It is!" he happily answered.

"Does Jane ever let you have this much fun?!" He shook his head. "Well, sucks for her 'cause you, buddy, deserve this!" He felt like he did, he really did.

Will didn't like the negative talk about Jane, so he said, "Jane can't be that bad." The boys looked at him like he had a third eye, making him tense up a little and add, "Well, before you guys argued."

Mike sighed before he and Lucas looked away from him. "Anyway, what do ya wanna do now, dude?" Mike looked around before spotting "Scoops Ahoy!"...

...

Finally, Andrew and Terry were walking back to The Gap, Terry asking, "So you guys actually went to Woodstock back then?"

He nodded. "Yup. One of the best times of our lives."

"Was it dirty?"

He scoffed. "Dirty, stinky, packed as hell."

Terry shivered at that. "Ugh."

He laughed a little. "It was perfect for us. Everyone was great and having fun, we got high out of our minds and loved it, we got to see



our favorite singers and bands there. I swear, I couldn't be any happier when I saw Janis and Grateful Dead performing. It was the best time of my life."

She looked understanding of that. "I thought you guys were too hippy before..." He grinned at that. "But THAT just confirms that you guys are."

He laughed once again. "Is that such a bad thing?"

She shook her head. "No. You guys are great people. That's enough for me." They then stopped at the front of the store, the two facing each other. "Well, I've gone away long enough. It's time to get back to it."

Andrew nodded. "But this was fun."

She giggled a little, smiling. "Yeah, it was." Andrew had always loved her smile, thinking it was the most beautiful he's ever seen.

"We can hang out again sometime."

The dirty-blonde-haired woman looked thoughtful for a moment. "I'd like that." The two exchanged smiles before she went into the store again. "I'll see you later!"

"Bye!" He took a deep breath, looking at Stacey, who was helping out a customer. She and Dave had an actual good idea for once and now, he's gotten another woman he liked hanging around with. And she liked him too. He began walking away as he thought about moving from Bloomington to Hawkins. He would, but due to the news from this place, he'd rather not. But...maybe he should due to his friends living there...and Terry as well.

Stacey finished helping a customer as she spotted Terry walking in, her grinning and walking towards her. "So?" she asked her.

Her friend chuckled a little at that, then replied, "I really like Andrew."

She raised her eyebrows up. "You do?"

She knew that look, so she scoffed. "Hey, not in THAT way, okay? I just see why you're friends with him now."

Stacey nodded, the two walking into the cash register area. "Yeah, he is a great guy." She crossed her arms and smirked. "You guys planning to hang out more?"

Terry nodded. "Actually, yeah. It was great talking to him and learning more about you guys."

She looked curious. "Wait, about us?"

"Yeah." She then leaned close to whisper to her, "I know about your drunken serenade to one patron in a bar."

Her jaw dropped, the woman gasping and shaking her head. "That son of a bitch..." Terry giggled at her reaction. "By the way..." The dirty-blonde-haired woman gave her attention. "Your daughter and her friend was here, wanted to say hi."

She looked surprised to hear that. "Oh." Maybe she was here with Max, she presumed because she knew none of them liked shopping, to take her mind off of what happened this morning? If so, that was great and she knew her sister and brother-in-law had to drive them here, maybe they were here as well. She smiled. "I hope she didn't give you any trouble." She did remember that Stacey stated that she didn't like kids.

Stacey shook her head, giving her a reassuring look. "Not at all. She was a sweetheart."

She smiled wider. "I'm glad she was."

...

While Steve was working the counter, he learned from Robin that that they've deciphered once sentence: "The week is long." Underwhelming as hell, but at least they were making progress. He was holding two ice cream cones, one with a scoop of mint and the other a Rocky Road. "Here you guys go: one mint, the other a Rocky Road," he said, handing Mike the mint ice cream and Lucas the Rocky Road. Will already got his strawberry ice cream and Lucas paid

everything else he had on him for these cones.

Steve then realized something, looking at Mike for the first time in six months. "Wait..." The freckled boy looked at him. "Are you even supposed to be here?"

He looked like he got struck by lightning before he answered, "No." He and Lucas then got into a snickering fit before they left.

Will sighed and followed them out, but not before he turned to Steve and said, "Also, tell Dustin that we're sorry about leaving him." He then left with his friends.

He nodded before he went and opened the sliding window, saying, "Hey, Dusty?" He and Robin looked at him. "Friends were here and wanted to let you know that they're sorry." Dustin just nodded before Steve closed the window again. He then realized something else.

Not too long ago, Jane and Max were here, Jane ordering vanilla with sprinkles and Max strawberry with extra whipped cream. The little shits weren't together. Huh. He wondered why.

...

Jane and Max met up with Becky and Carl, Jane saying, "We're ready to leave now!"

The adults nodded. "Alright. Just give us a couple minutes and wait outside, okay?" Becky asked, the girls nodding before they went to the entrance of the mall, eating their ice cream.

Neither of the adults noticed that they walked past the boys as they finally got into The Gap. There, they spotted Terry working the cash register now and finishing up service with a customer. As the customer left, the sisters locked eyes with each other, Terry smiling. "Becky!"

"Terry!" She got closer to her. "Just wanted to see what your new job is like."

She smiled at her. "Well, it's a little less insulting than serving drunk men food and beer."

She nodded at her. "True."

Stacey noticed Terry talking to Becky and Carl about her job, making her go towards them and say, "Hi." They looked at her, the woman giving them a friendly look. "I'm Stacey, Terry's coworker."

Becky's eyes twinkled, pointing at her after she snapped her fingers. "You're one of Terry's new friends."

Surprised, she nodded. "Yeah, I am." She guessed Terry told this woman about her and Andrew and Dave.

She held a hand out for her to shake. "I'm Becky, Terry's sister."

Terry did mention her, so she shook her head and said, "Nice to meet you, Becky."

...

As Jane and Max waited outside and talked to each other about how fun today was, the boys got out, enjoying their ice cream and chatting to each other. To make him move on from what happened earlier, Will started talking to Mike about Dungeons and Dragons. "And you can build your own world and control what happens," he explained, the freckled boy looking interested.

"Jane told me about this," he told him. "But I never get to play it."

That surprised him, actually. "Well, I think you should." He looked up in thought. "I think I have another Mage piece."

He looked a little puzzled. "Mage?"

"Someone with magic," Lucas explained to him. "They use spells to fight and stuff."

"I think you'd definitely fit as a Mage," Will added. Mike had to agree, especially since he had powers. Besides, this Dungeons and Dragons sounds like fun.

The boys had no idea that they were getting close to the girls, who were chatting while waiting for Becky, Carl, and Tina.

"I'm just really glad we got to do this," Max said to Jane. "We should do it again sometime." She then licked her ice cream.

Jane licked her own as well, nodding. "Of course." It was like she DIDN'T have a shitty morning. Maybe everything will go right today-

And suddenly, Mike bumped into Jane, killing the conversations they had with their respective friends. All of them looked shocked to see each other, Mike and Jane the most shocked. The boys thought she was going to hang out with her family...instead, she was here with Max...and shopping bags.

"Jane?" he asked sharply. She tensed up, seeing Mike himself...out in the open...like this. He wore a new shirt and...he was carrying ice cream. Jane was so shocked, she dropped her own ice cream on the ground. Lucas and Will did not look forward to what was going to happen and neither did Max.

She pointed at him and asked in breathy way, "What...are you doing here?"

His expression turned blank, stating plainly, "Hanging out with the boys." Jane glared daggers at Lucas and Will, the two feeling the sharpness of that.

She looked away and muttered, "You've got to be shitting me." She looked aghast.

Lucas got near him and stated, "There's nothing wrong with that. Gave him some new style-" He gestured at Mike's new shirt. "-showed him how to play games-"

She looked at him, angry. "He's NOT supposed to be here!"

He narrowed his eyes at her, despite the fact that he wore sunglasses. "It's one time, Jane, cool down-"

"No!" She shook her head. "You KNOW he's not supposed to be here and you brought him here anyway!" Lucas looked annoyed, but not as much as Mike was. She then looked at Will. "You too! Why'd you allow him to do this?!"

Of course the auburn-haired boy wasn't used to his crush yelling at him, him feeling tense. He took a deep breath and replied, "You know, Jane?" She tilted her head, looking both angered and puzzled. "The lab's shut down, there's a ton of people here, some that might look like Mike-

"That's no excuse!" she interrupted, glancing at him and Lucas. "What are you two, stupid?!"

"Hey!" Mike exclaimed, the girl looking up at him. "They're not stupid."

She scoffed. "Not that you would know."

He looked annoyed. "What does that mean?"

"It means you shouldn't let them do whatever they want with you," Max chimed in, looking annoyed.

Lucas gave his girlfriend a baffled look. "We didn't FORCE him to do this! He WANTED to do this!"

"Yeah, I wanted to do this," the freckled boy said.

"Besides, he's not your pet! He can do whatever he wants, with or without us!"

"Yeah, Jane." He looked at her sharply. "I'm not your pet." Jane's jaw dropped.

"Also, weren't you supposed to be with your aunt and uncle and cousin?" Lucas asked.

"They're here, asshole," Jane replied. "We were just waiting for them."

"Stop insulting my friend," Mike demanded of her.

She looked at him sharply. "Stop defending him!"

He looked appalled. "Why?!"

"He's acting like a dumbass!"

Lucas scoffed. "Oh, ME? A DUMBASS?!"

"Yes!" both her and Max answered.

Will didn't like this at all, so he chimed in, got between them, and said, "Guys, just cut it out-"

"Shut up, Will," Jane said. "You enabled this." He looked at her, shocked that she said that to him.

"No, I didn't-"

"Then why are you with them?!"

"I..." He stammered, trying to come up with an answer. She got him there. She really did.

She huffed and shook her head. "Will, why? I expected better from you."

He took another deep breath. "Jane, it's just one time-"

"ONE TIME?! Do you KNOW the risks of someone sketchy seeing him?!"

"Those people are out of business! Why the hell would they try again?!"

"Will is right, Jane," Mike stated, getting closer to her. "They're gone."

She looked frustrated as hell. "How would you know? For all I know, some guy or woman working for them saw you and is calling the government right now!"

"They're GONE, Jane. GONE!"

"No, they're PROBABLY not!"

"How would YOU know?!" She gasped, offended that he used her words against her.

Lucas nodded. "Yeah, Jane, how exactly would YOU know? You don't even have powers!"

Max glared at her boyfriend and said, "Lucas, shut up." He rolled his eyes at her before grabbing her friend's shoulder. "Let's just get to the car-"

"You need to leave," Jane coldly demanded of her boyfriend, ignoring her request. "Right now."

He scoffed at her. "YOU need to leave."

"I'm not moving until my auntie and uncle are here! YOU got the bikes, so LEAVE!"

Now he looked both angered and heartbroken, asking solemnly, "Why are you treating me like garbage?" That hit her like a ton of bricks. Her eyes began to well up as well as her throat.

"I just want to protect you, Mike."

His eyes began to water too and his voice began getting shaky. "By treating me like garbage?!"

"NO!"

"THEN YOU'RE NOT PROTECTING ME, ARE YOU?! YOU JUST TREAT ME LIKE TRASH AND NEVER LET ME HANG OUT WITH THE OTHERS!" Jane looked very forlorn as well as Mike. Their friends never looked so shocked and sad to see this happen before their eyes. They then saw that they drew in a bit of a crowd, though the couple hadn't noticed yet.

Jane felt like shit, but she had to be right...right? She wiped her watery eyes. "Why can't you see what I'm doing...?"

Mike sniffled, answering, "What you're doing, Jane...is making me feel worse." She looked up at him, disheartened.

"Mike-"

He shook his head. "Go."

She shook her head as well. "No, you need to go, as soon as possible."



"No, you go."

"YOU go!"

"YOU GO!"

She shoved him, reminding him of how she shoved him six months ago, after returning to Hawkins. She pointed to her left. "YOU GO AND GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE, MIKE!"

Some tears streamed down his cheeks as he replied loudly, "FINE! I'LL GO!" Without any forethought...he shoved his ice cream into her shirt, making her gasp and look down at the stain. The ice cream slid down and joined hers. She looked up at him, seeing him looking frustrated and disheartened as hell. He wiped his tears, sniffled, and walked to the bikes.

He only took a few steps though before turning back and saying, "By the way..." Since in his eyes, she didn't try to fix the situation, he proclaimed, "I dump your ass!" The Party looked shocked as all hell hearing that, Jane looking like she was struck by lightning. Her heart crumbled and her blood ran cold. Did he just...? He...? He actually...?

As he walked away, she looked at her guy friends, looking like she was going to break into tears about what happened. They looked solemn, then turned to bike Mike back home and try to comfort him.

Jane saw that there was an audience for their argument, making her feel worse. The crowd dispersed, some chatting about the incident. She looked down, then closed her eyes, crying and wiping her tears. Max gave her a comforting hug she returned.

Mike wiped his tears, trying to look like he wasn't affected, although it was clear as day that it was. Lucas gave his shoulder gentle squeeze while Will asked, "Are you alright?"

He sniffled once more and answered, "No."

"Come on, let's get you home." They then went on their bikes, Mike mounting himself onto Will's, and they all biked away.

Becky, Carl, and Tina came out to see Jane crying and hugging Max.

Becky looked shocked as hell before telling Carl, "Handle Tina for me, hun." He did as she ran to her niece, the girl seeing her and letting go of Max's hug. Once she got close to her, she asked, "Oh my God, what happened, sweetie?"

She sniffled and shook her head. "I don't wanna talk about it right now." Forlorn, she gave her niece another tight yet comforting hug. She really needed it.

The two of them never thought they would be like this to each other now, and separated like this. Why...? Just...why...?

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**So...that was rough. But how was this chapter? Any typos or mistakes I might've missed?**

**It was fun writing the sequences where everyone in the mall were having fun. I think everyone deserves it, y'know?**

**And then there's the breakup scene...I'm sorry if you guys are disappointed that I wrote Mike and Jane still breaking up. I thought it would make sense for Mike to tell Jane that in this situation. I wrote it so that the both of them seemed to be wrong. I'm glad that you guys saw that Jane was being unreasonable during the phone call, so I hope you guys see that for the both of them here. Hope I wrote that entirely awful situation well.**

**I also hope Will warming up to Mike doesn't seem out of left field to you guys. All he needed to do was hang out with him more.**

**Review, follow, favorite, and I'll see you guys in the next chapter!**